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**REPORT ON  
THE STUDY OF  
THE FUTURE ROLE, PROGRAM, AND STRUCTURE  
OF THE  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WELFARE**

**NOVEMBER 1959**

**Conducted by  
Greenleigh Associates, Inc.  
550 Fifth Avenue  
New York City**

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November 27, 1959

Dr. David G. French, Chairman  
Study Commission on the Future Role of the  
National Conference on Social Welfare  
22 West Gay Street  
Columbus 15, Ohio

Dear Dr. French:

I am pleased to transmit to you the attached report of our study of the National Conference on Social Welfare in relation to its future role, program, and structure on which we have been engaged since January 1959.

As you know, the task has been a much larger one than was initially contemplated, because of the complexities of the problems dealt with and the necessity for obtaining primary data through two supplementary and related studies, one on the attitudes and reactions of conference attendees, and the other on conferencing patterns of national agencies.

The recommendations contained in this report are the most practical we could evolve after a thorough and objective analysis of the problems of the National Conference and the conferencing needs of the social welfare field.

While we recognize that some of the recommendations may be somewhat drastic, we are firmly convinced that no other alternatives will as affirmatively meet the needs and advance the interests of the National Conference and the field of social welfare.

As the study progressed, we became increasingly aware of the importance of the National Conference as an integrating force in this fragmented field of social welfare. We hope our recommendations will assist the Conference more fully to fulfill this role.

On behalf of myself and my assistants who worked with me on various phases of this study, Dr. Hazel McCalley, Mrs. Hellen Darion and Stephen Greenleigh, I wish to express my deep appreciation of the wholehearted cooperation and invaluable assistance we received from you and the members of the Steering Committee.

It was a pleasure to have been associated with you in this endeavor.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Greenleigh

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This is a report of an independent study of the National Conference on Social Welfare undertaken in January 1959 at the request of the Study Commission on the Future Role of the NCSW. The purpose of the study was:

- a. To analyze the present structure and program of the National Conference in light of trends in social welfare and in the larger society of the past decade;
- b. To compile information on conferencing activity in the social welfare field and make it available to the Study Commission and the national organizations affiliated with the National Conference on Social Welfare;
- c. To conduct two workshops on conference arrangements in social welfare to be attended by the executive officers of selected national welfare organizations, the purpose of which would be to provide an opportunity for exchange of information and suggestions about ways of improving the present pattern of conference activity in social welfare; and
- d. To develop a set of proposals for modifications of the National Conference on Social Welfare which the Study Commission could consider in making its recommendations to the individual and organizational members of the National Conference.

A number of methods were used in effectuating the purposes of this study. (See Appendix A for methodology.) The literature pertaining to the NCSW and social welfare in general was reviewed, persons close to the National Conference as well as persons responsible for other national conferences were interviewed and consulted, two questionnaires were developed, used, and the results analyzed, two national workshops were planned and carried out, and periodic consultation was had with both the Steering Committee of the Study Commission and the staff of the NCSW.

However, early in the study it became necessary to modify and expand some of the original plans. For example, as a result of one of the workshops, it became apparent that more information about individual attendees and their reactions to the National Conference was required, and that a more comprehensive study of conferencing by national organizations was needed. As a result a sample of those attending the San Francisco Annual Forum was interviewed in depth and a questionnaire on conferencing was devised and sent to selected national organizations. The results of these two related studies as well as other information gathered are included in the study, where appropriate, or in appendices.

Moreover, from the beginning it became apparent that some of those factors which brought about the study complicated the task of making an objective analysis of the NCSW. For example, the name "National Conference on Social Welfare"

created a problem of definition. The term "social welfare" is amorphous because it embraces a number of concerns to society. Those persons, who deal with these concerns, come from a number of fields of interest, belong to a number of diverse organizations and have various professional affiliations. Not only are social workers involved in the problems of "social welfare," but also a number of other professionals, such as economists, psychologists, sociologists, physicians, nurses, public health officers, as well as untrained career persons and volunteers in social welfare and health agencies are likewise involved. One objective of the study, therefore, was how to obtain increased involvement of this diverse group in the National Conference.

As the study progressed, it became increasingly evident that the National Conference has an important role as an educational forum, that it commands the respect of a large number of persons, and that historically it has made a valuable contribution to social welfare. It also became evident that the function it performs should be continued as a separate entity. This opinion was concurred in by the executives of national agencies at one of the workshops. And yet, despite these strengths, this report may appear to be unduly critical, since recommendations for modifications are necessarily based on weaknesses rather than strengths. Therefore, the weaknesses must be given considerable space. Strengths play a less important role because they do not call for modification. This should be kept in mind in reading this report.

Throughout this study the staff had the wholehearted cooperation of the Steering Committee, the staff of the NCSW, executives of national organizations, and individuals closely related to the National Conference. Without such cooperation this study would not have been possible. We wish, therefore, to express our sincere appreciation.

One of the purposes of this study, as stated above, was to develop workable proposals for modification of the National Conference. These proposals and recommendations can be found throughout the study, together with the supporting rationale. They are, however, summarized for convenience in the following section. It is believed that these recommendations would give new vitality to the National Conference, assure to it a more unique and unifying role in social welfare, strengthen the educational role of the Annual Forum, and more effectively advance the interests of the social welfare field.

## II. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a brief summary of the recommendations of Greenleigh Associates, which incorporates some suggestions made by various groups and individuals. Suggestions made by various persons but not recommended by Greenleigh Associates are omitted from this summary, but are contained in the body of this report. The recommendations in the main relate to the purpose, program and structure of the National Conference. Because the primary responsibility of the NCSW is a forum function, the bulk of recommendations are related to the forum program plan. Other recommendations tend to flow from the program recommendations, but in some cases are independent. They are presented topically rather than in the order which they appear in the text.

### Purpose

1. The National Conference should adopt a restatement of purpose. The suggested restatement, although similar to past purposes, is designed to give the NCSW a more unique function in the field of social welfare. The suggested purposes are as follows:
  - a. To provide an educational forum for the dissemination of new knowledge, and the identification and critical examination of broad basic trends, issues and problems which will affect the social structure, and thus the field of social welfare;
  - b. To provide an opportunity for individuals and agencies in social welfare, regardless of specialized interest, discipline or professional preparation, to discuss, explore and analyze the implications of these basic problems and issues, trends and new knowledge in relation to their own policies, functions, activities, techniques and methods of practice;
  - c. To give a unifying sense of purpose, clarify goals, and provide a mechanism for furthering the integration of the various knowledges on which social welfare is predicated, provide for exploration of topics of current interest, and provide a setting for informal discussion, meeting of associates, exploration of job opportunities, and other informal purposes;
  - d. To enable the Conference to call the nation's attention to outstanding social problems and to successes and failures in dealing with them; and
  - e. To foster the development of a close relationship between American social welfare and social welfare in other countries, particularly through the International Conference of Social Work.



### Forum Program Plan

2. The program plan of the Annual Forum should be modified to provide a partially focused conference in order more fully to carry out the recommended purposes. This program plan would have three parts:
  - a. Approximately one-half of the time devoted to basic issues, problems, or trends important to social welfare, preferably ~~not more than one or two~~. This first portion of the program plan would provide for a general session devoted to a full presentation of the topic in its broadest aspects. Following the general session, smaller sessions would explore the implication of the topic for various areas of specialization in social welfare. These would be followed by even smaller discussion or other smaller groups composed of persons at similar levels of operation in a given area of specialization. The participants in the discussion or small groups would discuss, examine, and analyze the topic as it relates to their own operations or concerns.
  - b. Approximately one-half of the time devoted to meetings of special interest to the various segments of membership. This portion of the program would be planned by subcommittees representing the areas of specialization and would be planned around expressed needs or interests of the members.
  - c. A smaller portion of time devoted to very current issues or topics of interest to social welfare, and a "state of the union" report on significant developments during the year in social welfare.
3. The President-elect<sup>1/</sup> in consultation with the Board of Directors should be given responsibility for selecting the basic problems, issues or trends around which a portion of the Annual Forum program would be focused, and for determining what areas of practice should be represented for purposes of program planning. The recommendation gives the authority to those persons which is implicit in their responsibility.
4. A general session at the close of the Annual Forum should be devoted to a synthesis of the sessions on implications and discussion groups. It is held that this will provide the total membership with an understanding of how social welfare relates to the topic in its specific service aspects.
5. Program planning should be started at least eighteen months before the Annual Forum. This is suggested because the program plan would require a greater length of time to be fully and carefully developed.

### Program Committee

6. The Program Committee should be composed of the President-elect, the President, the Past-President, three to six members-at-large, eight or more representatives of the fields of social welfare, any ad hoc areas of interest, and seven

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<sup>1/</sup> A later recommendation suggests that there be a President-elect and a Board of Directors. (See Section XVI.)

or more persons representing areas of social work practice. Such representation will cut across the field of social welfare to the greatest extent.

7. The President-elect in consultation with the Board of Directors should select the members-at-large and the representatives of the fields of social welfare. The membership should elect the members representing areas of practice. If the President-elect is responsible for a part of the program, he must be able to choose the persons to carry it out. On the other hand, that part of the program planned to meet the specific interests of the members should be planned by representatives of the membership.
8. The total Program Committee should be responsible for planning general sessions, scheduling meetings planned by the subcommittees, approving final program plans, and determining the mechanics for providing a synopsis of the Annual Forum. This will make possible a program which is well coordinated and assure to each part an adequate amount of time.
9. Those persons on the Program Committee representing fields of social welfare should be designated subcommittee chairmen responsible for planning the sessions on implications and discussion groups or other small group sessions relating to their fields. Subcommittee members should be chosen by the subcommittee chairmen and should include, among others, persons nominated by the National Conference on Social Welfare, the National Social Welfare Assembly, the American Public Welfare Association, the Council on Social Work Education, the National Association of Social Workers, and, where appropriate, the National Health Council. Subcommittee chairmen should be assured that the persons with whom they are to work are congenial. However, national organizations should be given an opportunity to share in the planning.
10. Program Committee members representing areas of practice should have similarly constituted subcommittees which would plan the special interest sessions.

#### Frequency and Timing

11. Consideration should be given to scheduling the Annual Forum on consecutive days, preferably Sunday evening through Wednesday, or Sunday evening, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. A consecutive three-day session would allow a logical development of the chosen topic. However, two consecutive days would serve the same objective almost to an equal degree.
12. The National Conference should be continued on an annual basis. A biennial forum would not be feasible from a financial point of view, would not make it possible for persons from all parts of the country to attend as frequently as necessary, and would not be often enough for thorough consideration of basic problems, issues or trends.
13. The Annual Forum should continue to be rotated geographically but according to needs of the field rather than a set plan. Geographic rotation assures to all people an opportunity to attend the Annual Forum periodically. However, it must be kept in mind that certain circumstances may make a particular area a poor choice for a given year or time.



#### Implications for National Organizations

14. The Board of Directors should be augmented by representatives of national organizations at its meeting in which the topic or topics for program focus will be selected. This will allow national organizations to have a voice in the selection of the topic.
15. Efforts for coordinating conferences on social welfare should be made by persuading the National Association of Social Workers to meet prior to the Annual Forum and national functional organizations to hold national, regional, or special conferences following the Annual Forum. This would allow national organizations to use the Annual Forum program to advantage in building their own conference programs and would serve to reduce the time and cost of conferencing.
16. The national organizations should employ more fully their channels of communication to create interest in the Annual Forum, participation of staff and volunteers, and distribution of the synopsis. Without exception, those national organization executives consulted feel the Annual Forum should be continued. Therefore, they should be willing to use their own organizations to support the Forum.

#### Structure

17. The President-nominee should become a President-elect in order to give him the official standing necessary to begin program planning in advance of becoming President.
18. The present Executive Committee should become a Board of Directors in order to make this body more consistent with the structure of other organizations.
19. The officers and three members of the Board of Directors should form an Executive Committee. This would make it possible for certain business of the NCSW to be taken care of between meetings of the Board.
20. The Constitution should be amended to reflect these changes in structure.

#### Constituency

21. The present individual and agency membership base should be retained because this is one of the unique features of the National Conference and is responsible for much of its vitality.
22. The program sessions should be planned to attract more volunteers, career persons in social welfare, and professionals from other areas related to social welfare in order that the total field of social welfare may be represented. The National Conference is the only organization which has as its goal the involvement of all these persons regardless of field of interest.

23. Increased efforts should be made to involve persons from other disciplines in the Annual Forum, as the topic warrants. This will bring to the Annual Forum persons who may be interested in a topic but would not find the sessions appropriate in other years.

#### Publications

24. The National Conference should continue to publish Proceedings in order that there may be a chronological and cumulative record of developments in social welfare, and a synopsis of the Annual Forum should be prepared as soon as possible after the close of the Annual Forum to be given wide circulation by state conferences, national organizations, and other interested groups. This would make the influence of the Annual Forum far greater than the actual attendance would make possible and keep the field informed.

#### NCSW Services Other than the Annual Forum

25. The present services of the National Conference organizational and book exhibits, and the employment service, should be continued. An increased effort should be made to publicize the consultative services available at the Annual Forum.
26. Consideration should be given to implementing the 1956 report on services to state conferences of social work because of the large number of persons involved in the state conferences and their potential contribution to the National Conference.
27. Consideration should be given to moving the headquarters of the National Conference to New York City in order that the coordination of conferencing in the field of social welfare can be furthered and the relationship with national organizations strengthened.
28. More effort should be made to provide opportunities for informal gatherings for attendees. Informal contacts are an important function of any conference, but because the attendees are from various areas of practice, efforts must be made to help persons from different backgrounds meet.

#### Finance

29. Consultation should be held with national organizations meeting with the Annual Forum on the matter of fees to be charged for the entire National Conference, including pre- and post-Annual Forum meetings. The matter of fees is extremely important to the financial stability of the National Conference.

Staffing

30. Consideration should be given to adding a staff member to the present National Conference staff for purpose of program development and coordination. Other services of the NCSW require considerable staff time and it will be necessary for the program plan suggested to have more staff service.

Service to U.S. Committee of ICSW

31. The existing relationships between the National Conference, the International Conference, and the U.S. Committee of the ICSW should be continued for the present, and consideration should be given to implementing the 1958 Report of the Committee on Relationship Between the NCSW and the ICSW as soon as possible.

Implementation

32. The Study Commission should determine a time schedule and set up such mechanisms as may be necessary for carrying out those recommendations which are adopted.

### III. DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL WELFARE AFFECTING NCSW

#### A. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NCSW

The NCSW, which first came into being in 1874 as the Conference of Boards and Public Charities related to the American Social Science Association, has been a dynamic organization changing to meet the needs of the time and of a growing professional group. While still a part of the American Social Science Association, its forum activities were devoted both to theory and to practice. However, by 1879 it became independent as the National Conference of Charities and Corrections and began to turn away from the consideration of theory to the more practical aspects of practice and administration. At the same time it began to attract a broader membership base.

Originally its members were from state boards of charities, but gradually it began to attract persons from other public welfare agencies as well as private social agency personnel. This change in constituency did not, however, change the emphasis on techniques of practice and problems of administration. Despite this interest in practice, the Conference program attacked major social problems - child care, poor laws, delinquency, etc. It also recognized changes in the profession of social work itself, first by recognizing case work as a specialized field.

By the second decade of the twentieth century the Conference, which changed its name to the National Conference of Social Work, had become more than a single conference. A number of national organizations and specialized groups held conferences at the time of the Annual Forum. This resulted in a considerable saving in time and effort and produced some cross-fertilization of ideas.

However, as these national organizations and specialized groups grew and developed institutional needs, there was a tendency for them to split away from the NCSW. Although a number of national organizations continue to hold meetings at the time of the Annual Forum as Associate Groups, most hold national conferences of their own at a different time and place. Some of those which have continued to hold their national conference in conjunction with the Annual Forum have found the arrangement not wholly satisfactory. One has pulled away recently and others have threatened to do so. In recent years this tendency of national organizations to hold national conferences unrelated to the Annual Forum has created serious competition for the NCSW and has increased the costs of conferencing in the social welfare field.

The Annual Forum has continued to be concerned with major social problems affecting social welfare and the problems of administration and professional techniques. A survey of the Proceedings reveals that the basic problems confronting social welfare in the United States in any given area have been reviewed at the Annual Forum. Social insurance, unemployment, the division of the national income, mental health, racial segregation, social reform, and numerous other topics have been included. According to Bruno a review of these Proceedings provides the history of social welfare in the United States.



Although concerns of the social work profession have been subjects of Annual Forum sessions, these broader topics have brought to the Annual Forum leaders from a number of related disciplines, such as, economics, the law, sociology, psychology, and cultural anthropology. It has been this interdisciplinary approach which has given the National Conference much of its vitality. It has assisted the social worker per se to develop his philosophy, which, according to Leonard Mayo, includes both a concern for people as such and a responsibility to speak out in respect to the causes of social problems. This consideration of causes of social disorder historically has been the aspect of the Annual Forum which has made it unique in the field of social welfare.

#### B. GROWTH OF SPECIALIZATION IN SOCIAL WELFARE

At the same time that national organizations have tended to grow, there has been a tendency toward increased specialization within social welfare. This specialization has manifested itself in the growth of specialized national agencies and specialized areas of practice. This tendency toward specialization has been a natural development in social welfare as well as in other fields of knowledge. As knowledge grows it becomes increasingly difficult for any one agency to provide the multitude of services or perform a multiple of tasks adequately, hence, specialization.

Although specialization is necessary in a complex society and a culture with advanced knowledge, it has a splintering effect on a total field of knowledge. Specialists tend to become compartmentalized and lose sight of the total field from which the specialization springs. They tend to forget that other persons are concerned with similar problems.

In social welfare this tendency toward specialization has tended to separate personnel into specialized agencies and areas of practice. Each tends to advance itself without due regard to what other specialized groups are doing or what is needed by the total field. If common problems are to be effectively attacked, there must be a synthesizing force within social welfare; a force which can bring together the trained social worker, the career social worker, the layman, professionals from other fields and the national agencies. This amalgamation of agency and individuals has been a unique function of the NCSW inherent in its membership base.

#### C. EVOLUTION OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING SOCIAL WELFARE

At the same time that the NCSW has performed a synthesizing function between individuals and agencies representing different interests and training, other national organizations have developed. Some of these have been restricted to social work and others have been oriented to the broader field of social welfare.

When the National Conference of Social Work changed its name to the National Conference on Social Welfare in 1956, there was a tacit agreement that the term "social work" had become too narrow a concept for the National Conference. Since the prior name change in 1917, "the terms 'social work' and 'social workers' have narrowed and come to signify only



certain categories of people who are involved in our social services.... This tendency to restrict 'social work' to denote a specific group of social welfare measures and a specific series of skilled services has been hastened by the development of a profession of social workers...."<sup>2/</sup>

This emergence of the profession of social work has been responsible for the evolution of at least two other national organizations in the field of social welfare: the National Association of Social Workers and the Council on Social Work Education.

1. Development of National Association of Social Workers.

Concurrent, with the development of the profession of social work, has been the growth and development of a professional association to meet the needs of the professional group. At first, a number of associations developed to meet the needs of certain fields of practice. Finally, in 1955, these groups were merged to form the NASW.

In the past the NASW has held its delegate assembly just prior to the Annual Forum, and has also held meetings on Tuesday and Thursday as an Associate Group. For the first time, in November 1960, it will hold its delegate assembly separate in time and place from the Annual Forum. This partial movement of the NASW away from the National Conference may have serious implications for the future of the Conference. If the NASW should follow the pattern of other professional societies, the delegate assembly will be augmented by a national conference considering techniques and practice and other matters of importance to the profession. All professional associations and learned societies studied, have a conference activity.<sup>3/</sup> It cannot be predicted at this juncture what form the NASW meetings will take in the future. However, in looking ahead, the possible development of the NASW along lines similar to other professional associations and learned societies should be kept in mind. This is particularly true if the results of the San Francisco interviews are typical of NCSW membership. In that stratified sample 77% of the interviewees were NASW members. Whether similar results would be obtained in another part of the country or from a sample of the entire universe cannot be predicted.

2. Council on Social Work Education.

Another organization which involves national organizations as well as schools of social work is the Council on Social Work Education. It is the role of this organization to improve the teaching of social work. Like other national organizations, it has its own annual national conference.

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<sup>2/</sup> Burns, Eveline, "Social Welfare is Our Commitment," The Social Welfare Forum, 1958, p.4.

<sup>3/</sup> Those included were American Nurses' Assoc., American Psychological Assoc., American Sociological Society, National Education Assoc., Adult Education Assoc., American Public Health Assoc., American Economic Assoc., American Political Science Assoc., American Historical Society.

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Schools of social work play an important role in social work and social welfare. Thus, if, as has been suggested by some, national organizations should be given a more direct voice in planning the Annual Forum, the important role of the CSWE would need to be considered.

### 3. The National Social Welfare Assembly.

Because of the growth and proliferation of national organizations, there arose a need for a planning and coordinating body similar to the welfare councils in local communities. To meet this need the National Social Welfare Assembly came into existence and is the "national planning body for social welfare."<sup>4/</sup> The activities of the Assembly are carried on through committees, conferences, and associate groups. It provides a medium through which national, regional, and local organizations can discuss common aims and concerns, can plan in a coordinate fashion, and can attack common problems. It involves both the layman and professional in national, regional, and local organizations, and carries functions in international social welfare.

Because of this coordinating function, it was suggested by some of those present at the March Workshop in Asbury Park that the function of the NCSW should be assumed by the NSWA. If this were to be done, however, the central purpose of the Assembly would need to be altered; it would need to be more all-inclusive than it is at present. As presently constituted it parallels other coordinating bodies in the field of social welfare, the National Health Council which is an associate group of the Assembly and the coordinating agency for health organizations, the American Public Health Association which coordinates public health organizations, and the American Public Welfare Association which is a coordinating body for public welfare agencies. If the NSWA were to take over the function of the NCSW it would need to do so in cooperation with all of these groups or include them in its membership. It would also need to involve other national organizations, professional associations, and learned societies.

### 4. Development of National Organizations.

As has been said, another significant development in the field of social welfare during recent years has been the growth and proliferation of national organizations. Some of these national organizations are distinctly part of what may be considered social work in the professional sense. Others are partly social work and partly education and recreation. Some are primarily recreational, social action, medical or public health in orientation. Attempts to count national organizations which might be considered part of the social welfare movement either wholly or partially are abortive. The list of organizations in the Social Work Year Book is either incomplete or misleading. This list includes some learned societies, foundations, research organizations,

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<sup>4/</sup> Social Work Year Book, 1957. p. 700.



associations of workers employed by one national organization, and other special interest groups. Likewise, the list of Associate Groups or member organizations of the NCSW is incomplete as is the list of members of the National Social Welfare Assembly.

Because no definitive determination has ever been made as to which organizations are in the field of social welfare, the development of only those organizations which are now Associate Groups or agency members of the NCSW were considered for purposes of this study. Historically, some organizations had meetings in conjunction with the NCSW. In recent years the tendency has been for each of these organizations to have conferences which are distinct in time and place from the NCSW. At the 1959 Annual Forum only six of the Associate Groups held their only national conference either prior to, concurrent with, or immediately following the NCSW.

This tendency toward separate conferences for agencies affiliated with the NCSW made it necessary to conduct a survey of such conference activities. Therefore, ninety-four national organizations, which are related to the NCSW, received a questionnaire designed to gain information about their conferencing patterns and their relationship to the NCSW. Of the 56 agencies responding to the survey, nine have no conference activity. Of the 47 remaining which have conferences, 33 or 70% hold conferences annually, 10 or 21% hold a biennial conference, and 4 or 9% have a triennial national conference. (See Appendix C for more detailed results of the survey.

Many of these conferences give a substantial proportion of the time to matters which are similar to those considered at the Annual Forum. For example, 22 or 47% of those holding conferences reported that time is devoted to the discussion of broad social issues and trends. 36 or 77% reported that time is devoted to broad social issues and trends with an immediate implication to the organizational program or methods. However, an analysis of the conference program seems to indicate that many of those answering category one: - general issues and trends - were over-stating the facts. Without exception the broad issues and trends appeared to be directly related to the agency program. This is important to keep in mind. Other conference time was devoted to:

|  | <u>Number</u> | <u>Per cent</u> |
|--|---------------|-----------------|
| Presentation and/or discussion of specific problems faced by organization    | 38            | 81              |
| Exchange of ideas  | 41            | 87              |
| Presentation and/or discussion of techniques of operation:                   |               |                 |
| a. For volunteers (non-paid lay workers)                                     | 18            | 38              |
| b. For professionals (paid workers)  | 35            | 74              |
| Presentation and/or discussion of matters relating to professional standards | 27            | 57              |
| Other  | 8             | 17              |

Thus many of the items which are now a part of the Annual Forum on an inter-disciplinary or inter-agency basis are included in the conferences of national organizations on an agency basis, namely, exchange of ideas, matters of professional standards, techniques of operation, and broad trends and issues. Consequently, there appears to be substantial duplication.

In general, national agencies feel that national and regional conferences serve an institutional purpose. They feel that they are essential to the growth and development of the organization and its continuance. Specific purposes of conferences are:

|                                    | <u>Number</u> | <u>Per cent</u> |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Conduct of official business       | 41            | 87              |
| Exchange of ideas and information  | 46            | 98              |
| Training:                          |               |                 |
| Volunteer (non-paid lay)           | 17            | 36              |
| Professional (paid staff)          | 21            | 45              |
| Giving a unifying sense of purpose | 39            | 83              |
| Inform general public of program   | 28            | 60              |
| Other                              | 9             | 19              |

Thus such conferences serve to forward the aim of national organizations and provide loyalty to a given group in the social welfare field. As far as the total social welfare field is concerned, such conferences can be both helpful and harmful. They are helpful in involving an ever-growing body of professionals and volunteers in the interests of social welfare. They can prove harmful if loyalty to one organization is not tempered with an understanding of the total job to be done. It has been the stated purpose of the NCSW to provide a medium for looking at the total concerns of social welfare. Only as it provides the over-all approach can it have meaning.

#### D. EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENTS ON THE NCSW

Each of these developments has had an effect upon the National Conference of Social Welfare. First of all, from being the only national conference and integrating influence in this heterogeneous field, it now shares its original function with numerous other national organizations. Secondly, as the profession of social work has become more clearly defined, there has been a tendency for it to assume a more predominant role in the National Conference. Furthermore, the NASW as an Associate Group has employed the NCSW as a national medium for special sessions of concern to its total organization and its sections. As a result there has been proportionately less participation of volunteers, specialists from related



fields, and career persons in social welfare who are not members of the NASW. This is substantiated by the survey made at the Annual Forum held in 1959 and by previous surveys made at other Annual Forums. Because of specialization the Conference has tended to become more of a forum around specialties and less of an integrating mechanism.

Moreover, the growth of other national conferences has meant that there is considerable duplication of effort and conference content. Considering not only the present pattern but emerging patterns as well, it is likely that this duplication will become greater in the future. Therefore, if the NCSW is to continue, it must perform more of a unique role in the field of social welfare, a role no other organization can or should perform.

A more serious effect for the future of the NCSW itself has become increasingly apparent in recent years. As other national organizations have grown and claimed loyalties, the membership of the NCSW and attendance at the Annual Forum has tended to remain constant and in some years decrease both in absolute figures and in the percentage of the total number of persons in social welfare. Although attendance or membership cannot be considered a criteria for measuring the vitality of an organization, it must be considered as a factor in studying an organization.

This has been one of the primary motivating forces for this study. It raises the questions: (a) Should the NCSW continue as a separate organization in light of the multiplicity of national organizations serving social welfare? (b) If it is decided that it should continue, and this was the consensus of the March and September Workshops, what should be its function and program to more adequately meet the needs of social welfare and to attract either new members and participants or at least hold those it now claims? These are among the questions that this report attempts to answer.

#### IV. PURPOSES OF THE NCSW IN LIGHT OF THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE FIELD

##### A. PURPOSE OF THE NCSW

Considering the developments in social welfare, it is important to review the purposes of the National Conference in light of these developments. The NCSW cuts across agency affiliations and specialties in practice; it includes professional social workers, professionals from other fields, untrained career persons in social welfare agencies, and volunteers in its membership. Thus it has a unique opportunity to synthesize the thinking in social welfare and to "take off the blinders" of specialized agencies and individuals. To fulfill this role what should be the purpose of the NCSW? The preamble of the Constitution of the NCSW states:

"The National Conference on Social Welfare is a voluntary association of individual and organization members who have joined the Conference to promote and share in discussion of the problems and methods identified with the field of social work and immediately related fields. The Conference is a forum for such discussion. It does not take an official position on controversial issues and adopts no resolutions except occasional resolutions of courtesy."

This statement is descriptive of the NCSW rather than a statement of purpose.

##### 1. A statement of purpose

One stated purpose of the NCSW, as given in the pamphlet Facts about the NCSW, is "to provide a dynamic educational forum for the critical examination of basic welfare problems and issues." The implication of this purpose is that the NCSW cuts across national agency and professional organization lines, that the constituents are any persons who are interested in basic social welfare problems and issues, and that it provides an opportunity for the critical examination of such problems and issues. If the NCSW meets this purpose it has a unique function.

##### 2. Corollary purposes

It is possible to identify from the literature about the National Conference, from the statements of national agency representatives at the two Workshops, and from interviews with persons closely related to the NCSW, a large number of subsidiary functions which, it is believed by various persons, the NCSW should fulfill. Not all of these functions are mutually exclusive and a number might be considered by-products rather than direct functions. However, those stated include:

- a. To provide an opportunity for persons engaged in social welfare to discuss the implication to their own field of specialty of basic trends and issues in the field of social welfare.

- b. To enable the Conference to speak as the mouthpiece of social welfare, calling the attention of the nation to outstanding problems, to successes and failures in dealing with them, and generally to act as a propaganda vehicle for social welfare.
- c. To give a unifying sense of purpose to the field of social welfare.
- d. To provide an opportunity for the discussion of problems which transcend any one agency's concern or which might not be appropriate or politic for an agency to discuss.
- e. To provide an opportunity for all persons engaged in social welfare, regardless of discipline, to share knowledge and techniques which are germane to the total field of social welfare.
- f. To provide to those persons concerned with community organization a sense of over-all problems in order that there may be a frame of reference in evaluating a particular community welfare program.
- g. To provide an opportunity for national agencies to view their own programs in the perspective of the total social welfare field and to further inter-agency cooperation, coordination and relationships in providing community services.
- h. To provide an opportunity to learn of the most recent developments in related fields: sociology, psychology, education and other related social sciences.
- i. To provide an opportunity to identify the areas of over-lap and unmet needs.
- j. To provide an opportunity for persons in unrelated fields of social welfare to meet informally for discussion and interchange of ideas.
- k. To bring to the attention of those engaged in the operation of social welfare programs outstanding developments in methods in the service of social welfare or in proved applicability of known methods to a new type of situation or case.
- l. To provide an opportunity for those engaged in social welfare to see and hear outstanding persons in social welfare and related fields.
- m. To elevate to national attention individuals who are little known outside of their own agencies but who have excellent potential.
- n. To enable those persons engaged in social welfare to understand their own specialties in the light of the total social welfare field by exposing them to problems and issues outside of their own field of specialty.
- o. To provide an opportunity for peer recognition.
- p. To provide an opportunity for the sharing of experience, techniques, and skills.

- q. To provide status for the individual.
- r. To provide status for the field of social work.

To this list should be added functions agreed upon by the membership in 1956 which overlap some of the nineteen already mentioned.

- a. To provide a medium for the interchange of ideas and techniques between laymen and professional workers, sectarian and non-sectarian groups, specialties within the field and public and voluntary agencies.
- b. To assist in improving standards of performance in social welfare and to increase the effectiveness of the individual agencies.
- c. To develop a better public understanding of welfare problems, needs, social welfare objectives, programs and methods.
- d. To develop citizens' support of an participation in social welfare activities.
- e. To emphasize the common elements present among workers and organizations concerned with social welfare programs and services.
- f. To assist in sustaining morale among volunteer and paid workers of social welfare organizations.
- g. To provide a chronological and cumulative record of basic developments in the field of social welfare.
- h. To provide auspices and machinery for related groups.

It is not unlikely that this list could be augmented by other literature or further interviews. However, the task is not to expand the list but to cut it down to size. Twenty-seven purposes are too many for any single national conference.

Therefore, given the stated purpose and the purposes ascribed to the NCSW, how, if at all, should the purposes of the Conference be redefined? In the final analysis the purposes will determine the program.

#### B. PRESENT PROGRAM AND STATED PURPOSE

An analysis of the program of the last several Annual Forums indicates that the NCSW has endeavored to attain all twenty-seven purposes. Although each Annual Forum has had a theme, there appears to have been little relationship between theme and program sessions outside of the Presidential address. The majority of sessions are geared to meet the needs of specialties within the field of social work. They are not concerned with broad social issues or problems. There is little to attract the lay person, the untrained career person in social work and the professional in related fields, such as recreation, public health, corrections, etc. Very little time is given



to "a critical examination of basic welfare problems and issues." Even the Wednesday sessions, given over to one topic, tend to break down into sessions on professional social work practice and techniques. At the same time other national conferences, such as the American Orthopsychiatric Association conference, draw a large number of social workers.

C. RELATION OF PRESENT PROGRAM TO WHAT INDIVIDUALS SAY THEY WANT

The rationale for having the majority of the sessions related to the problems, techniques and practice of specific fields of social work is: this is what the participants want. There was a general feeling stated at the March Workshop and by others that the practitioner is interested only in what is pertinent to his day-to-day job. There is a feeling that any discussion of broad social issues must be "bootlegged" into the National Conference. It is also generally held that unless those attending the Annual Forum get information pertinent to the daily job and the specific field, the attendance will not support a National Conference.

Whether these feelings are true or not is open to question. Those who were interviewed at the 1959 Annual Forum were asked to comment on the values which the Conference had for them. (See Appendix B for selected results of these interviews.) They were not asked to comment on the value of any specific session or sessions. The difference between the responses to questions asked at the San Francisco Annual Forum and in Operation QM in 1954, 1955, and 1956 is not significant because the purpose of the two studies were not the same. Operation QM, conducted for the Program Committee, asked participants to indicate why they attended a given session. The questionnaires and interviews employed in San Francisco asked participants to comment on what they expected to get and wanted to get from the total Annual Forum. The two studies can be compared, however, in regard to objective responses such as: field of specialty, position held, agency auspices, and geographic level of operation. In regard to these objective responses the two types of studies are markedly similar.

Because interviews were held before and during the Annual Forum, the responses of many were based on what they thought they would get rather than on what they actually experienced in the sessions. However, since the majority in the sample had been in the field of social welfare for ten years or more, it is likely that they had knowledge of the Annual Forum either as previous attendees or through the Proceedings.

The value which the majority indicated they would get and would like to get from the 1959 Annual Forum was "information of recent developments of professional interest." However, these developments did not relate to techniques and skills, for only 38% felt they would receive such information and 58% would have liked such information.

When what the attendees indicated they thought they would get is compared with what they would like to get, the pattern is as follows:



|   | Will<br>Get | Rank | Would like<br>to get |
|---|-------------|------|----------------------|
| 1. Informs of recent developments of professional interest                              | 1           |      | 1                    |
| 2. Keeps me in touch with leaders in my own field                                       | 2           |      | 2                    |
| 3. Gives me a sense of identity with a larger movement                                  | 3           |      | 8                    |
| 4. Contributes to my professional development   | 4           |      | 4                    |
| 5. Keeps me abreast of fields other than my own specialty                               | 5           |      | 5                    |
| 421 6. Helps me to re-think my ideas on controversial issues                            | 6           |      | 3                    |
| 564 7. Clarifies long-range goals of social welfare                                     | 7           |      | 1                    |
| 8. Helps learn of new problems of concern to social welfare                             | 7           |      | 6                    |
| 9. Provides useful new personal contacts  | 8           |      | 8                    |
| 10. Makes me realize importance of my own job   | 9           |      | 9                    |
| 11. Provides techniques and skills that can be applied to day-to-day problems of my job | 10          |      | 7                    |

It is interesting to note that the attendees place clarifying goals of social welfare on an equal footing with information about developments in the profession, as to what they would like to get. However, long-range goals rank seventh in what they do get. Of third importance to the attendees is assistance in rethinking controversial issues, whereas they feel this is sixth in what they will get. Whether it is true or not, the practitioners - for they were the predominant group in the sample - believe they want to know more about problems of social welfare and controversial issues. This is borne out by those marked as most important. In this, developments of a professional interest was first and long-range goals second.

When asked where they looked for information on techniques and skills, the largest number reported that this was gotten at the conference of their own national organization or professional association.

When attendance at meetings is analyzed, similar conclusions can be drawn. Those meetings, other than general sessions, which drew the largest attendance were those which seemed to deal with the broadest issues from the descriptive statement in the program: mental health, the aging, alcoholism and prevention - except in those periods when there were no sessions on broad social issues.

D. RELATION OF PRESENT PROGRAM TO ROLE OF OTHER NATIONAL AGENCIES

Agencies such as the Family Service Association of America, Child Welfare League of America and American Public Welfare Association devote much of their national and regional conference time to professional problems, techniques, skills and practice. The sessions planned by the sections of the NASW are likewise devoted to such topics. Furthermore, the meetings of Combined Associate Groups and of particular Associate Groups are geared primarily to skills, techniques and professional practice. The result is that the NCSW tends to duplicate the efforts of these other organizations without adding a significant new dimension.

E. RELATION OF PRESENT PROGRAM TO NEEDS OF FIELD

Social work like other professions has tended to become fragmentized and specialized. It has tended to train and utilize practitioners as technicians rather than professionals. This tendency has been pointed up by the Curriculum Study of the Council on Social Work Education. As a result of this study, schools of social work are tending to return to a "generic" rather than a "specialized" curriculum. Since many persons in social work received training in a specialty, there is a need for integration and clarification of the total field. Only as people become conscious of the total problem can there be a concerted effort to solve the broader social welfare problems.

At the same time that there has been a tendency toward specialization, the professional social worker has become more conscious of his status as a professional. Status comes not because the professional desires it, but because the community believes he has an important professional function to perform. Only when those involved concern themselves with problems that are important to the public, will such recognition come.

F. SUGGESTED PURPOSE FOR NCSW.

Given the needs of social welfare for integration of the special knowledges on which it is based, and given the expressed desires of the attendees and the role of other national agencies, what role should the NCSW play? To play a vital role: (1) It must meet the expressed needs of its constituents, (2) it must perform a unique function in social welfare, and (3) it must have a vital program which will attract social workers and persons from closely allied fields. Unless it can fulfill these functions, there is real question whether it should continue as a separate entity.

It is suggested that the following purposes would serve these ends:

1. To provide an educational forum for the dissemination of new knowledge, and the identification and critical examination of broad trends, basic issues, and problems which will affect the social structure, and thus the field of social welfare.
2. To provide an opportunity for individuals and agencies in social welfare, regardless of specialized interest, discipline or professional preparation, to discuss, explore and analyze the implications of these basic problems and issues, trends and new knowledge in relation to their own policies, functions, activities, techniques and methods of practice.
3. To give a unifying sense of purpose, clarify goals, and provide a mechanism for furthering the integration of the various knowledges on which social welfare is predicated; provide for exploration of topics of current interest; and provide a setting for informal discussion, meeting of associates, exploration of job opportunities, and other informal purposes.
4. To enable the Conference to call the nation's attention to outstanding social problems and to successes and failures in dealing with them.
5. To foster the development of a close relationship between American social welfare and social welfare in other countries, particularly through the International Conference of Social Work.

Such purposes would provide a unique function for the NCSW; would assist the constituents, both individual and agency, lay, career or professional, to see the problems, issues and trends in their broadest aspects; and would allow each agency and specialized field to analyze its own program, policies, structure, and practice in the light of these over-all issues and trends.

Such purposes would also meet some of the basic criticisms of social welfare today. It would assist the professional social worker in casting off what Eveline Burns refers to as the "cocoon approach."<sup>5/</sup> It would help "take off the blinders" referred to at the March Workshop of national agency executives. It could hope to attract persons from outside social work who are concerned with social welfare. It would also serve to enhance the social movement aspects of social welfare; "...a collective enterprise which consciously seeks to effect social changes."<sup>6/</sup>

These central purposes would also serve other ends and provide some of the other functions specified. Each specialized field within social work and social welfare, as well as each national organization, is concerned with some of the basic problems, issues and trends which are important to

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<sup>5/</sup> Burns, Eveline, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>6/</sup> Stroup, Hubert. "The Cultural Context of Social Work in the U.S." Social Work Year Book, 1957, p. 58.



social welfare. However, it is also agreed that these basic problems, issues and trends are most often seen from the point of view of the needs and setting of the agency or specialization itself. There is little opportunity to view the total problem or problems in the context of the entire field of social welfare. Furthermore, it is not always obvious that some problems, trends and issues are pertinent to a given discipline, specialization or agency. For example, housing is a basic problem and issue important to social welfare. It affects the program and service demands of family agencies, youth-serving agencies, health agencies, etc. Yet it is doubtful that the topic of housing per se is often a subject of consideration in the national conferences of family, youth or health agencies. Yet an opportunity to become informed on the problems, trends and issues related to housing would serve to sharpen the thinking and modify the program of each. This would be particularly true if there was opportunity to discuss the implication of housing problems, trends and issues to each of the above mentioned agencies.

Another point which has frequently been made is that some trends or issues would not be appropriate or politic for some agencies to discuss at their own conference. For example, a youth agency with no public affairs or legislative program would not be likely to discuss the question of racial integration at its national conference. Nevertheless, the fact of segregation and racial and religious prejudice has a direct effect on its ability to implement program and policies. A Conference devoted to basic problems, trends and issues would serve to keep the constituencies of such a youth agency informed. Moreover, such a Conference would provide an opportunity for the pooling of the best information in social welfare and related fields. Experts both from within and without the social work field could be used in the presentation and discussion of basic issues.

Another reason for these purposes is that it would serve to bring these problems and issues into focus. A presentation and discussion of basic problems and issues in the broadest sense is not enough. There are a multiplicity of journals, conferences and publications devoted to the multiple problems of social welfare. If thinking is to be sharpened, if practice is to be improved to meet the issues, and if there is to be an adequate research program to substantiate ideas, the implications of issues and trends must be discussed. The NCSW has a function only if in its structure it provides a means of pointing up how each practitioner and planner is affected either directly or indirectly by the issue or trend. In this way a broad basic problem is brought home.

Such discussion would also serve to point up the areas of difference and controversy and the areas needing study and experimentation. It would bring to the attention of the total field methods which are being used to meet the problem, but which might otherwise be left undiscovered. It would give an opportunity for the sharing of ideas which is so important to the participants. It would also give to those attending a much greater sense of participation for which they express a need.

Further, social welfare needs a unifying sense of purpose. Like other fields and professions, the last generation has been marked by specialization. This has been necessary because of the vast body of knowledge which has become available. But specialization has its weaknesses. Each specialist tends to lose sight of the total field of which he is a part.



Furthermore, rivalry tends to emerge without regard to common goals. Only when specialists are brought together around a common problem can these common goals be identified and a common plan be evolved to arrive at solutions which require the best thinking and cooperation of all.

Moreover, a unifying sense of purpose which could evolve from discussion of common problems would help social welfare identify itself more positively to the general public. Its voice would take on more meaning and depth. It would serve the corollary purpose of making a greater impact upon the total community. Too often, biased and uninformed persons, incompetent to speak on social problems, command the attention of the public. Rather than understanding the role of those persons involved in social welfare they lay the blame for the evil on the doorstep of the only group competent to speak. These critics identify social welfare workers as "do gooders" who have created the problem through ineptness. These same workers are often intimidated by the attack. They often fail to speak affirmatively in support of their methods or help the public understand the true nature of the problems.

This circumstance is at least partly due to the fact that there has been no adequate platform for airing problems and issues. The NCSW through its Annual Forum could provide this platform. It could more positively assist the public in understanding the problem, in understanding the role of social welfare in meeting the problem, and gain status in the public imagination.

The reasons given for the five primary purposes contain some of the other stated purposes. For example, if basic problems, issues and trends were presented at general sessions this would give the participants an opportunity to hear and see leaders in the field and related fields. Discussion groups would give an opportunity for those unknown, who have potential, to be heard. Furthermore, a presentation of basic problems, trends and issues would give a frame of reference which would assist community planners, national agencies, and other planning groups to identify areas which need to be explored or for which plans need to be made.

Discussion groups would provide for a cross-fertilization of ideas and a sharing of knowledge and techniques. The National Conference itself would provide a setting for informal discussion, for the meeting of associates, and for the sharing of ideas. The atmosphere of any conference tends to promote informal discussions and meetings between persons of like interests. Since persons from many different backgrounds meet at the Annual Forum, those informal gatherings can play an important role. Efforts should be made to provide more opportunities for such informal gatherings. If these five primary purposes are accepted as those toward which effort should be directed, many other functions would be served either as corollaries or by-products.

## V. PRESENT ANNUAL FORUM PROGRAM PLAN AND ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTIONS

Since the primary function of the NCSW is the forum activity, it is necessary to determine what the program of the Annual Forum should be before other questions are dealt with. Such questions as financing, role of staff, frequency, geographic rotation, and organizational structure are subsidiary to and dependent upon the program plan of the Annual Forum. This section will present alternative plans which have been suggested and will be followed in the next section by the program plan which is believed will most fully carry out the proposed purposes.

### A. PRESENT ANNUAL FORUM PROGRAM AND PROGRAM COMMITTEE

At the present time the NCSW is in session approximately eight days. During the first days Associate Groups, such as the United Community Funds and Councils, National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, Volunteers of America, Association of State Conferences of Social Work, and sections of the NASW, hold meetings. The Annual Forum function begins on Sunday evening and continues on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Associate Groups hold meetings on Tuesday and Thursday with Combined Associate Group meetings planned for the morning of these two days. The majority of meetings during the total eight day period are planned by Associate Groups.

Normally there is a theme for the Annual Forum. This theme is usually broadly conceived and is the subject of the presidential address. There appears to be little or no reference to the theme in the other meetings of the Annual Forum or the Associate Groups. It is the responsibility of the Program Committee to select the theme, plan for general sessions, arrange the scheduling, and approve the program plans of three Sections and three Common Service Committees.

The Program Committee in any one year is composed of the President, Past-President, Executive Secretary, six members-at-large, and chairmen of the three Sections and three of the Common Service Committees. The chairman of the Audio-Visual Aid Committee is an ex officio member. The three Sections are:

Services to Individuals and Families

Services to Groups and Individuals in Groups

Services to Agencies and Communities

Although this was not the original intent, these Sections have come to represent casework, group work and community organization.

The six Common Service Committees, three of which meet on alternate years are:

Financing of Social Welfare Services

Methods of Social Action

Personnel and Administration

Public Relations

Planning Meetings in Social Welfare

Social Research

There is also an Audio-Visual Aids Committee.

The time periods allotted to the Sections and the three Common Service Committees do not overlap. Meetings planned by the Audio-Visual Aids Committee are scheduled at various times within the Annual Forum period and the two Associate Group days.

Each Section and Common Service Committee has a subcommittee which is responsible for planning the meetings of the Section or Committee. Representatives of the Associate Groups plan for the Combined Associate Group meetings on Tuesday and Thursday. Meetings of the Associate Groups themselves are planned by the sponsoring organization. Thus many persons are involved in the program planning process.

The result of this process has been referred to as a "cosmic cafeteria." There are meetings on a wide variety of subjects designed for persons with a variety of interests. During the Annual Forum there are some meetings to attract almost anyone interested in any phase or facet of social welfare. But the majority of meetings appear to be designed to attract the professional social worker. Meetings, however, are open to anyone who wishes to attend. Although there are a wide variety of meetings designed to attract persons of varying interests, there are certain weaknesses in the present program plan. These weaknesses are:

1. The attendance during the time periods allocated to Sections and Common Service Committees is unequal.
2. The program planning responsibility of Section I is greater than that of the other two Sections.
3. There is duplication in content between some of the sessions of the Sections, Common Service Committees, and Associate Groups.
4. Emphasis is placed on the presentation of subject matter by prepared papers, and attendees often find the presentation dull.
5. There is not enough opportunity for discussion.
6. Attendees have difficulty making a choice among sessions during some program periods but find little of interest during other periods.
7. Taken as a whole, the meetings do not serve sufficiently to advance the thinking in the field of social welfare. Whereas individual sessions may deal with basic problems, this is not the overall effect of the Conference.
8. Some of the Associate Groups have expressed a need for more consecutive time.

- 7 9. There appears to be little relationship between the Annual Forum theme and the planning of the individual sessions.

Various plans have been suggested to correct these weaknesses.

#### B. MODIFICATIONS OF PRESENT PROGRAM TO CORRECT WEAKNESSES

Some of the plans suggested are modifications of the present program to correct some of the weaknesses. Each of these suggestions would modify the present Sections and eliminate the Common Service Committees.

1. One such suggestion is to reconstitute the Sections as:

- (a) Problems and Program
- (b) Professional Practice
- (c) Structure and Organization of Social Welfare Services

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how  
Each of these Sections would plan meetings during non-competing time. During each period there would be meetings planned for the several areas of practice or interest; these meetings would not be competitive as at present. It has also been suggested that the theme be determined early by the President or the Executive Committee in order that Section meetings could be planned around the theme, and that the Program Committee be appointed by the President to assure coordinated program planning. Concerns of the present Common Service Committees would be integrated into the Section sessions.

This plan would provide a more focused conference, greater cross-fertilization, and more equal planning loads for the Sections.

2. A second alternative for modifying the present Conference plan would be to have Sections reconstituted according to the expressed desires of the members. This is a common conferencing pattern. A Section could come into being whenever a given number of members, i.e., two hundred, requested it. These Sections could represent areas of practice, common interests, or a problem area. Sections could continue as long as there was sufficient interest. New Sections could be created on approval of the Executive Committee, or Sections could go out of existence in the same manner. This would give the Annual Forum the greatest degree of fluidity, would guarantee that the desires of the members were being met, and would allow new alignments.

Under such a plan each Section would be responsible for its own sessions and the Program Committee would plan general sessions and allocate Section time. Membership in the NCSW could be through Section or free with Section meetings open to anyone. This would allow persons interested in a subject outside their own area of practice to attend meetings in a different area.



Each of these suggestions for modifying the present Annual Forum plan are directed at eliminating some of the present weaknesses. Each one is aimed at meeting what is believed to be the needs and desires of the present membership. It is doubtful, however, that any one of them would provide a more integrated program, would have any greater educational impact upon the participants or would give a unifying sense of purpose to social welfare. To a lesser or greater degree the Annual Forum would continue to be a "cosmic cafeteria"; little would be done to further thinking in the field or to provide "a dynamic educational forum for the critical examination of basic welfare problems and issues."

#### C. A CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

There has been a feeling expressed by some persons that there is not enough representation of national organizations in the program planning of the Annual Forum. There are also those who believe that the NCSW should be controlled by national organizations. If this point of view is accepted, two alternative plans could be developed:

1. One alternative would be to have a conference similar to that of the National Education Association. A number of national organizations would be persuaded to hold their own national conferences in the same city at the same time. The NCSW would perform administrative services through allocating space, plan general sessions, etc. The remainder of the sessions would be planned by the cooperating national organizations either as separate and distinct meetings or as joint meetings with other national organizations with similar programs or problems. There would be a common exhibit hall and other common services provided. Such a program would tend to cut down the amount of time and travel for conferences in social welfare. Persons who now attend a number of conferences at different times and places could attend several at one place.

Each organization could provide for its own publicity but the impact on the public could be greater than the sum of the parts. General sessions could be geared to basic problems or trends common to all. By bringing a large group together the costs of each conference could be reduced.

However, such a conference would provide for little "cross fertilization" between national organizations and specialized areas of practice. It would have little effect in giving a unifying sense of purpose and in counteracting the adverse effects of specialization. It might also lead to unhealthy competition between national organizations.

2. A second alternative that might meet the same goal would be to have a conference planned and governed by national organizations. The NASW, CSWE, NSWA and the APWA might jointly plan such a conference with the assistance of their affiliates. What form the Annual Forum would take if such a plan were accepted cannot be predicted. Therefore, it cannot be said what value it would have in providing a forum for the discussion of

basic trends and problems, in providing a unifying sense of purpose, or in assisting social welfare in calling the attention of the nation to basic problems of concern to society.

Such a plan would change the essential nature of the NCSW which is based on individual and agency memberships. It would not provide the "grass roots" approach which has been a unique strength of the Annual Forum.

## VI. THE RECOMMENDED ANNUAL FORUM PROGRAM PLAN

It is held that none of the alternatives suggested would provide a unique function for the National Conference, meet all of the above five suggested purposes or solve the basic weaknesses of the present program plan. It is recommended, however, that a partially focused conference would correct most of the weaknesses and retain the strengths of the present Annual Forum.

### A. A PARTIALLY FOCUSED CONFERENCE

It is recommended that the Annual Forum be changed to provide for:

1. General sessions and smaller sessions around major basic problems, issues or trends important to social welfare; preferably not more than one or two so that each may be explored in depth.
2. Meetings around problems or practice of special interest to a significant number of members, and
3. Exploration of the most recent problems or issues of concern to social welfare.

Since this program plan falls into three parts, each part will be dealt with separately.

It is suggested that approximately one-half of the time of each Annual Forum be devoted to exploring a limited number of basic trends, issues and problems and their implications to those involved in social welfare. It is recommended that in any one year only one or two basic issues or trends be selected in order that these may be discussed in depth and be critically analyzed. If more than one topic is selected, the topics should be unrelated. In this context basic issues, problems or trends would be defined as follows:

- a. Basic trends - changes in the social structure which create problems which in turn affect social welfare services or practice. Examples of such trends would be: changes in the composition of the population; technological changes, such as automation; changes in national income distribution; changes in the mobility of families; suburbanization, urbanization or other changes in the location of the population; emphasis on scientific progress or the progress of any other area of knowledge to the exclusion of others; changes in employment patterns, such as, the increased number of employed mothers; and the dependence on mass media.
- b. Basic problems - social conditions which affect individual or group adjustment to society and which create social maladjustments and, therefore, affect social welfare services and practice. Examples of such problems would be: delinquency, family breakup, housing, the aging, leisure time, racial and religious discrimination, education, poverty, and health.

- c. Basic issues - differences in the approach to social welfare problems which affect how social welfare services or practice will be given. Examples of basic issues are: social and health insurance, financing social welfare, birth control, public vs. private welfare services, and provision of medical care.

#### B. SELECTION OF TOPIC OR TOPICS

It is suggested that the President, in consultation with the Executive Committee and representatives of national organizations, select the problems, issues or trends to be dealt with and determine what fields of service should be represented on the Program Committee.

In keeping with the implicit responsibility which the President carries, there should be presidential responsibility for selection of the basic issues or trends to be presented at the Annual Forum. Since the President-nominee<sup>7/</sup> is selected a year in advance, a principal responsibility of that person should be the selection of the Conference topic or topics. During the year before assuming office, the President-elect, in consultation with the Executive Committee, could explore various topics, select the Program Committee and begin work on the program. Final topic selection, however, should rest with the President-elect.

Although the topic selection should rest finally with the President-elect, it should not be done unilaterally. It is proposed that the Executive Committee devote a part of one of its meetings to the discussion of the topic or topics for the Annual Forum for the subsequent Conference year. This would allow more time for program planning. It is suggested, however, that at this meeting of the Executive Committee the membership be augmented by representatives from national organizations. How these representatives would be selected is open to question. Suggestions for selections are:

1. Representatives of those national organizations which will be holding national conferences immediately prior to or following the Annual Forum and in the same city.
2. Representatives elected by the Associate Groups.
3. A combination of the above two with the larger portion of the group being chosen by those national organizations meeting prior to or following the Annual Forum, and
4. Representatives selected by coordinating national organizations and the NASW. This would also include representation from APWA, NSWA, CSWE and perhaps other appropriate bodies.

The specific effectuation of such representation should be decided by the Study Commission of the National Conference.

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<sup>7/</sup> To make this feasible it is suggested that the President-nominee become a President-elect. As used in this context, the Executive Committee would be the same as the Board of Directors as recommended in the Section on Governing Structure.



The topic or topics should be broad enough to have implications for all fields of social welfare but narrow enough to be contained. Some have suggested that there are not enough basic problems, issues and trends in the modern world of concern to the social welfare field to require an Annual Forum. This is begging the issue. It is true that the basic problems and issues in the United States have shifted away from those which have historically plagued society. For example, poverty is no longer the most serious problem. However, the very abundance of America may be responsible for accentuating a new series of problems: delinquency, mental health, health itself, family ills, the aging, housing, etc. The field of social welfare tends to deal with the symptoms of these problems. Perhaps in the kind of focused conference suggested, they and social scientists in related fields would consider the basic causes and their cures. For example, a family caseworker may be called in when a family is on the verge of divorce - a needed service. But divorce is merely a symptom of a more basic problem. It is the problem behind the divorce rate which needs consideration and this, as C. Wright Mills says in The Sociological Imagination, is the job of the social scientist. Social welfare workers borrowing from all the social scientists as well as other disciplines should be able to see the problem in its largest perspective. The National Conference can provide this perspective.

The Program Committee would be responsible for planning the general session which would explore the chosen topic. It would through subcommittees plan for smaller sessions which would explore the implications of the topic for given areas of social welfare and arrange for the discussion groups which would follow.

As has been said, any topic to be selected would need to have implications for all areas of social welfare. This would be necessary in order that the implication sessions be meaningful. In the general session the topic would be explored in the broadest sense. If it were an issue or a problem or trend lending itself to controversy, it could be presented as a debate between persons of opposing points of view. The general session would serve to define the topic, identify the manifestations growing out of the topic, point up areas of controversy and differences, and indicate new knowledge that is needed.

Following the general session, the Annual Forum would break up into approximately ten smaller sessions. At these smaller sessions the implications for a given field of social welfare would be explored. The person or persons making the presentation would need to be thoroughly familiar with the opening session presentation and build upon that. The implications would relate to how the problem, trend or issue might affect practice, program and policies of welfare agencies and workers, the needs for research, personnel needs, means of identifying the problems, and case studies, as well as experiences of persons who are involved with aspects of the topic.

#### C. IMPLICATION SESSIONS

It is suggested that the implication sessions be planned to follow an adaptation of the list of personnel employed in social welfare as defined by the Committee on Survey of Social Welfare Manpower in 1960, even though

this list is not entirely appropriate for program planning. It is suggested that sessions on implications be set up to provide for the following service groups as well as any additional:

1. Income Maintenance Services
2. Family and Child Welfare (Excluding Court Work with Children)
3. Probation and Parole and Correctional Services
4. School Social Work
5. Mental Health Services
6. Social Services in Medical Care
7. Rehabilitation Services for the Physically Handicapped
8. Group Work, Informal Education, and Recreation Services
9. Community Organization Programs

Depending on the topic, each of the above suggested categories could have sessions on implications or various categories could combine or recombine because of closely related implications. For example, if the topic were delinquency, it would be natural to combine persons providing services in child welfare and court services to children. Also according to the topic other categories might be provided for in any one year on an ad hoc basis. For example, if housing were the topic, an ad hoc committee on city planning might be considered. It would be the responsibility of the Program Committee to suggest combinations of categories and provide for ad hoc categories, when indicated.

Following the implication there would be sessions planned for persons at similar levels of experience, knowledge or interest from the same general area of practice. These meetings could be composed of administrative personnel and board members, supervisors, practitioners, research specialists and other specialists in social welfare. Such sessions could be small discussion groups to explore the implications of the topic for various levels of operation, or other types of sessions which would allow for the free exchange of ideas or concerns related to the topic. The nature of these sessions would be determined by the Program Committee and its subcommittees. No one pattern would need to be followed by the entire Annual Forum.

If discussion groups were planned, the discussion should be lead by a person thoroughly familiar with the foregoing presentations and the interest and needs of the persons making up the discussion group. The discussion groups would discuss the implications or application of the basic topic for each specific level of operation, area of professional practice, etc.

Although no assignment of sessions would be made, each group would be planned to attract those from a certain area of practice or interest. Discussion groups could be kept small on a first-come-first-served basis.

It is recommended that at a closing session there be a synthesis of all the sub-sessions on implications and discussion or other small groups. This would serve to keep the entire conference attendance informed about all areas of practice and their particular concern in relation to the topic. This would make it necessary for a record to be kept of the discussion groups. The session on implications or any other more formal sessions could be synthesized from prepared papers. It would be the responsibility of the Program Committee to plan for the general session on synthesis. There are various kinds of arrangements which might be made for this purpose, and it might be considered presumptuous to recommend any one.

Two examples of how this part of the program could develop are as follows:

Assume a trend, "automation" were chosen as the main topic. Following the general session in which the concepts of automation, its general effects on the labor force and society were presented in all of its aspects, a tentative time table projected and example of its effects explored, one of the smaller sessions would be on the implications of automation for family and child welfare services. At this meeting the effects of automation on the family and the family caseworker would be explored. For example, is automation likely to create more or less family breakdown and why? What services must the family have to prevent job dullness and increased leisure from affecting its stability? Is automation likely to draw more or fewer mothers into the labor market? During the period of transition how can family income be maintained? What new skills and knowledge will the family service worker need to assist the family affected by automation? What, if any, new kinds of information will be needed about the family? If automation creates an increase in family mobility, how can agencies in widely separated cities keep one another informed? What kinds of data are needed or what are the sources of information on the progress of automation in a given service area? What other welfare services can be called upon to assist the family affected by automation? What, if any, new services will be required?

Once the implications to an area of service are explored, persons at similar levels of operation broken down into smaller discussion groups could discuss what will need to be done to meet the problem. Persons with experience would share with others observed manifestations of the trend, ways of insuring that problems are being met, and the identification of areas of need for service. The administrators would discuss the effects of a possible larger case load on financing and staffing. The practitioners would discuss the kinds of skills and knowledge that would be needed to meet the problem, etc. Other small sessions might be planned around a new program developed to meet the problem, research needed to provide the needed information, or a change in practice with implications for meeting the problem.

Although the topic itself is broad, it would become a tool for sharpening the thinking in social welfare along specific and practical lines. It would also help the worker on the day-to-day job by helping him prepare to meet a situation before it arises. It would help to interpret to the public how the social welfare field operates to alleviate social problems.

If a problem rather than a trend were chosen, the same process would be followed. For example, if housing were the topic the child welfare worker



in a session on implication would discuss how changing housing patterns affect the placement in foster homes, the increased burden of illegitimacy due to the breakdown of community restraints resulting from displacement of persons for public housing, the difficulties of investigating families in a non-community oriented housing project, and the effects of poor or overcrowded housing on the welfare of the child. He would also discuss what supporting services the child welfare worker would need in a slum area, a new housing project, and in a homogeneous suburban area.

In discussion or other small groups the administrators could project possible agency demand due to changing housing conditions. The practitioners could discuss ways of securing adequate information, of helping the child adjust, and what changes in skill are required to meet situations changed by housing patterns.

#### D. MEETINGS ON SPECIAL INTERESTS

The second major portion of program time would be allocated to meetings of special interest. Whether rightly or wrongly it is believed that many persons attend the Annual Forum to have specific and immediate problems solved. To meet this need afternoon sessions could be devoted to special interest groups or topics of special interest. These special interest sessions would be planned around the expressed desires of the members. Each year there are numerous suggestions made by the members for program content. These suggestions would be solicited in the future. Through the Bulletin members would be requested to submit these suggestions for program content by a predetermined date. These suggestions would be screened by the part of the Program Committee responsible for these meetings. Furthermore, a given number of persons interested in a topic or problem could petition the Program Committee for time. For example, if a group of twenty or thirty asked for time to discuss a particular problem, time could be allocated to the group and they could be responsible for the session. The criteria for allocating time to any group would be:

- a) A topic germane to the field of social welfare,
- b) No other session planned which would be the same as that suggested, and
- c) Space and time available to accommodate the group.

A period devoted to special interests would allow for maximum participation of members in program planning. It would allow for flexibility of program content and would meet the needs of members. It would provide a balance for the more structured portion of the Annual Forum planned around one or two basic issues, problems or trends.

#### E. OTHER GENERAL SESSIONS

A third part of the program, most probably general sessions, would deal with current topics of interest and survey developments in the field. Since a program, one-half of which is devoted to a given theme, would require considerable upstream planning, it will not always be possible to anticipate



emergency problems or topics in advance. Therefore, a general session should be given over to the presentation of the topics of most current concern. These "hot topics" as they might be called could relate to projected legislation of interest to social welfare, an emergency problem requiring the attention of social welfare, a recently discussed trend or important research project which will affect social welfare practice and programs, or an important anniversary in social welfare. Such a session would be the responsibility of the Program Committee. An additional general session is proposed to review for the members the most recent developments in social welfare, in effect, a "state of the union" session."

#### F. A POSSIBLE PROGRAM FORMAT

The actual schedule for the Annual Forum should be planned by the Program Committee. One form, among others, for the schedule could be:

Sunday evening - General session - Presidential address

Monday morning (first period) - general session presenting basic topic or topics

Monday morning (second period) - smaller session on implication

Monday afternoon (both periods) - special interest meetings

Tuesday morning (both periods) - one further implication session and one or two discussion or small groups

Tuesday afternoon - special interest meetings  
- business meeting of the NCSW

Tuesday evening - general session on "hot topics"

Wednesday or Thursday morning (first period) - general session on State of Social Welfare

Wednesday or Thursday morning (second period) - sessions planned around "hot topics", special interests or on Annual Forum basic issues

Wednesday or Thursday afternoon - general session with synthesis presentation by preferably one person

#### G. PROGRAM COMMITTEE

In order for such a program to be planned several changes in the composition of the Program Committee and in the planning process would be necessary. Since the implications sessions and the discussion groups would need to build upon the general session paper and the implication session papers, planning would need to begin early.

The Program Committee would be composed of two parts, A and B. It would have in its membership the President, Past-President, and President-elect, three to six members-at-large, appointed for a three-year term, and eight or more persons representing areas of service plus six or more persons representing fields of practice, with one-year terms of service. The members-at-large and the eight or more persons (Part A) representing areas of service would be appointed by the President-elect in consultation with the Executive Committee and would be responsible for planning the program around the selected topic or topics. The seven persons representing fields of practice (Part B): case work, group work, community organization, social welfare administration, social work research, and social action, would be elected by the membership and be responsible for planning the special interest sessions.

The total Program Committee would be responsible for planning the general sessions and considering the program format. Each person on the committee representing an area of service or a field of practice would have a subcommittee appointed by himself in consultation with the President. It is suggested that each subcommittee chairman appoint some members from names submitted by the generic national organizations, i.e., the National Association of Social Workers, The National Social Welfare Assembly, the Council on Social Work Education and the American Public Welfare Association, as well as by the NCSW. Representation might be sought from the National Health Council if the topic chosen related to problems of health. Additional members of the subcommittee would be chosen by the chairman. This would provide for representation of national organizations as well as for "grass roots" members in the program planning.

In selecting the members of the committee to plan the sessions around the topic the following considerations would need to be kept in mind: (a) knowledge of the topic or topics, (b) knowledge of the field of service, (c) geographical representation, and (d) representation of public and private agencies. The members of the Program Committee elected by the membership could follow geographic rotation similar to that which is now used.

Each subcommittee of Part A would be responsible for planning the sessions on implications for its field of service and discussion or any smaller sessions for persons at various levels of operation. Although the total Program Committee would need to be informed about the general plans of subcommittees, each subcommittee would be responsible for its own sessions. It would be responsible for seeing that the topic and its implications for the field of service was thoroughly covered in depth.

Part B of the Program Committee would be responsible for considering requests from specific groups of members for program time and the allocation of the time during the periods devoted to special interests. Subcommittees of Part B representing fields of practice would also plan sessions within their own area. Program suggestions from members would be directed to the appropriate subcommittee. If a topic did not logically belong to any subcommittee, it could be considered by the total group and a method for meeting the request worked out. If a group suggests a topic they might be given responsibility for planning. Areas of practice could hold separate or combined sessions as the topics warranted.

As is true at present, such a Program Committee would involve many persons from widely scattered sections of the country. It would require, as at present, the devoted and concentrated efforts of volunteer service. It would retain the "grass roots" approach and also allow for the contribution of national organizations.

It is suggested as soon after the Annual Forum as possible the highlights of the meeting be published and made available to national organizations, state conferences of social work, and any other organization that might have an interest in the topic. This summary would supplement but not replace the Proceedings.

#### H. RATIONALE FOR PROGRAM PLAN

Such a program plan would serve the proposed primary purposes of the National Conference. It would advance knowledge in social welfare, give attendees an opportunity to become informed about an important problem, issue or trend, would help social welfare have more impact on the public, and would give the NCSW a unifying sense of purpose. Although attendees would be attacking a topic from different frames of reference, the discussion of a single topic would serve to make informal gatherings more lively. It would bring together persons from different settings around a common problem.

It is also suggested that such a program plan might attract persons from related fields. It is unrealistic to expect the psychiatrist, physician, sociologist, etc., to be attracted each year. However, if a topic were of interest to other groups special effort should be made to attract them. For example, in a year devoted to housing, housing officials, city planners, etc., should be urged to attend and contribute. In a year devoted to mental health psychiatrists, psychologists and physicians could be invited especially, etc. It is also suggested that the board member, if not the service volunteer, would find more in such a program to attract him. Implication sessions could be planned to attract the volunteers involved in agency planning.

Although a partially focused conference as is suggested is in one sense a departure from past program plans, there are several elements of similarity. In the past several years one day has been devoted to a topic and there are sessions planned around topics of current interest. These elements would be preserved but the proposed plan would provide for a more orderly exploration of a topic.



## VII. SUGGESTED TIME SCHEDULE FOR ANNUAL FORUM AND ASSOCIATE GROUPS

It is suggested that if such a partially focused Annual Forum plan is adopted that the Annual Forum be held on three consecutive days or Sunday evening, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday rather than Monday- Wednesday- Friday as at present. In this way more consecutive time can be given to the critical examination of the basic issues, trends or problems. If three consecutive days were chosen, Associate Groups could meet prior to or following the Annual Forum. If Monday-Tuesday-Thursday were selected, Associate Groups could meet Wednesday and Friday, and at other times prior to and following the Annual Forum.

In any plan for the Annual Forum it is assumed that Associate Groups will continue to hold meetings at the time of the National Conference. In fact, it is hoped that more national organizations will hold meetings at that time. Whether Combined Associate Group meetings are held should be left to the Associate Groups themselves to decide. In any case, a national organization should be allowed to hold its own meetings during any period of Associate Group days whether there are or are not Combined Associate Group meetings.

If Combined Associate Group meetings are desired by the Associate Groups, it is suggested that the same type of program planning now in effect, be continued. If no such formal arrangement is desired, it is suggested that national organizations with common interests be encouraged to work together in planning joint meetings.

The question which will be raised and must be answered is: if the Associate Groups are not to be given Tuesday and Thursday during the Conference days, what participation can be expected from national organizations? At the present time some national organizations hold meetings prior to or following the Annual Forum. It is suggested that as many national organizations as possible be urged to hold their national conferences, regional meetings or special meetings either immediately prior to or following the Annual Forum and in the same city or on Wednesday and Friday depending on the Annual Forum. The NCSW would offer its services in assisting these organizations in finding space and making conference arrangements.

It is recognized, however, that it would not be possible for the NASW, the NSWA, the CSWE and national functional organizations to meet concurrently. Many of the same persons are involved in two or more of these organizations. One solution might be for the NASW to meet one year and for some functional organizations to meet on the alternate year. This may not be a practical solution, however, since 70% of the national agencies in the survey of conferencing hold an annual conference.

A second possible alternative would be for the NASW to meet preceding the Annual Forum and for functional organizations to meet following the Annual Forum on Wednesday and Friday. Such a solution would have several advantages. If the Annual Forum were to convene on Monday and Tuesday, and Wednesday or Thursday, the NASW could take advantage of weekend time. This would interfere with work days to the least degree. A number of professional associations have found it necessary to hold meetings during periods when their members are not employed. For example, learned societies, which draw on academic persons, frequently meet between Christmas and New Years, around Labor Day or



at Spring holidays, when academic institutions are closed. Since there is no similar "slack period" in social welfare, a weekend meeting might serve the same purpose.

If Wednesday or Thursday and Friday, and even Saturday, were left for Associate Group meetings, these could plan meetings which would fit into the conference topic and attract volunteers who find attendance at weekend conferences difficult. Such a plan would extend the NCSW period from five to seven or eight days. This would be no longer than past NCSW sessions, including prior and past meetings of Associate Groups.

It is recognized that the majority of national agencies would not find it feasible at this point to coordinate their national conference with the NCSW. However, at the September Workshop of national agency executives, those who had been holding their national conferences as Associate Groups said they would continue with the plan. One other indicated that an effort would be made to coordinate with the National Conference and a number indicated that special or token conferences could be arranged following the Annual Forum.

It is interesting to note that fifteen of the national organizations affiliated with the NCSW hold their national conference in May and an additional eight convene in April or June. If those whose timing coincides with the NCSW could be persuaded to meet in the same city, a move toward coordination would be made. If the experience of these national organizations was favorable, others might be persuaded to join in a coordinated effort.

If such a plan were to be adopted, the time and place of the Annual Forum would need to be decided by mutual agreement between the National Conference and the participating national organizations.

Such a plan would have a number of advantages:

1. Those national organizations which give time to basic issues and trends of importance to social welfare could leave that responsibility to the Annual Forum and save time for matters more pertinent to their institutional needs;
2. If the NCSW provided a conferencing service for national organizations, such a service would be specialized and save staff time. As it is, only a few such organizations have staff who are expert in conference arrangements;
3. Staff and volunteers could plan to attend both the conference of the national organization and the Annual Forum and be away from their desks or home for no more than a week. This would save dual travel expense of two separate conferences;
4. Associate Groups which now have separate national conferences would have the responsibility for planning only one conference in any one year;
5. National organizations could discuss the implications of the Annual Forum topic for their own program, policies and practice, and assist their constituents in seeing its program in the perspective of the total field;
6. National organizations could plan to have combined meetings with other organizations in related fields or having similar problems; and

7. A large national gathering of those persons involved in social welfare would give more meaning to the entire field and would have greater public relations value. It would serve to raise the status of the entire field in the eyes of the public.

Such a plan would require mutual accommodation on the part of both the NCSW and the national organizations. But if there is value in such an effort, mutual accommodation should be feasible.

### VIII. FREQUENCY OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

One of the major concerns of the executives of national organizations at the two Workshops in Asbury Park was the question of frequency of the National Conference. A number of the spokesmen favored a biennial forum. However, these spokesmen were representatives of national organizations which have their national conference biennially. The question resolves itself into which conference cycle is most practical.

According to the staff of the NCSW the arguments for a biennial conference are:<sup>8/</sup>

- a. "Multiplicity of conferences...
- b. "Lack of new program materials...
- c. "The Annual Forum is too large and complex...
- d. "Increased attendance and participation... and
- e. "Economy - financial resources..."

Whereas, the arguments for an Annual Forum are:

- a. "Reduces need for additional conferences...
- b. "Social welfare is developing rapidly...
- c. "An Annual Forum meets the needs of the field...
- d. "Rotation of Annual Forum meets needs of country... and
- e. "An annual national forum is the most economical use of financial resources."

There is no question that the multiplicity of conferences is a potent argument in favor of a biennial conference. Those persons who support such a biennial conference are likewise interested in persuading other national organizations to meet biennially and on a year alternate to the NCSW. If it were possible to secure agreement from a number of national organizations to meet biennially and on an alternate year, a biennial conference would serve to reduce the amount of conferencing in social welfare and the consequent cost. However, since 70% of those reporting national agencies have national conferences annually and an additional 9% triennially, it is questionable if such accommodations could be made.

The argument that there are not enough basic trends or issues to support an annual conference is fallacious. The problem is not one of discovery but of selection. Basic problems and trends of importance to social welfare multiply as society becomes more complex. These problems are not as immediately

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<sup>8/</sup> Staff Working Paper for Study Commission, Annual vs. Biennial Forums, pp. 1-2.

apparent as poverty which was the prevailing problem until recent years. However, the very subtlety of present day problems makes them more pressing. They may tear the fabric of society before they become apparent as a problem.

It is the responsibility of those concerned with social welfare to face these trends and issues squarely before they become overwhelming.

The argument that an Annual Forum is too large and complex and should be held biennially is likewise fallacious. The complexity, if not the size, would increase if a biennial forum were held. The complexity would arise out of the need to solve a greater accumulation of problems.

It is possible that a biennial forum would attract fewer persons because of lagging interest. The geographic rotation of the National Conference creates a regional effect. The majority of persons who now attend an Annual Forum come from a 300 mile radius. The majority of persons attend once in four years when the Conference is nearby. If the same system of geographic rotation were retained for a biennial forum, opportunity to attend would be provided once in eight years. It is doubtful that sufficient interest in the forum would be maintained on that basis.

On the other hand, if the Conference were every two years, persons might make an effort to go longer distances. Agencies might be willing to underwrite the expenses for larger numbers to attend. Approximately one half of the attendees are from governmental organizations. It is not uncommon for such organizations to permit attendance at only one conference a year. For example, if the National Conference were held biennially and alternately with APWA, more governmental employees might attend. This presupposes that they would choose the NCSW over other competing conferences. Whether this would be true or not cannot be determined.

There is little question but that a biennial conference would be less costly to the NCSW and to those who attend annually. It would be necessary to reduce the size of the NCSW staff, for a biennial conference could not support the present amount of staff. Additional personnel could be hired to meet peak periods. However, an alternative arrangement, if the Conference were to be biennial, might be to transfer the responsibility to one of the generic membership organizations which could deploy staff for the purpose.

There is no clear-cut solution to the problem of periodicity. However, if a three-day forum focused around basic problems and trends is adopted, preceded or followed by meetings of national organizations, it is recommended that the annual pattern be retained on an experimental basis. The question of timing should be resolved finally only after enough time has elapsed to determine whether such a conference would be attractive or not.

The primary reasons for continuing the forum on an annual basis are: (a) It is firmly believed that this kind of conference is needed by social welfare, and (b) there are so many basic problems and trends that it is important that time be allotted to their full consideration.

As for the suggestion that the NCSW become a biennial forum with regional conferences on alternate years, it is recommended that this be rejected. It would increase rather than decrease the multiplicity of conferences. Furthermore, the majority of attendees interviewed in San Francisco favored an annual forum.



#### IX. GEOGRAPHIC ROTATION OF ANNUAL FORUM

It is recommended that the Annual Forum continue to be held in different areas of the United States. It is suggested that this rotation not follow any fixed plan but be adapted to meet the needs of the membership. It is recognized, for example, that cultural patterns in certain border cities of the Middle West like St. Louis make it difficult for some members to participate fully in the Conference. Although from a geographic point of view such cities are ideal, they should not be considered until there is a definite change in the cultural patterns.

The staff of the NCSW are fully aware of the problems and are constantly on the alert for new sites. Their judgment should be and is relied upon heavily in regard to the place of the Annual Forum.

#### X. CONSTITUENCY OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

There was some feeling on the part of participants at the March Workshop in Asbury Park and other persons consulted that there should not be an individual membership base. There are those persons who hold that only agencies should have membership. After studying the nature of the National Conference and considering in particular the program committee function, it is recommended that the present membership base of agencies and individuals be retained. In a sense the NCSW is a professional organization embracing a heterogeneous group from various phases of social welfare. This would be lost if the individual membership base were discontinued. Moreover, the individual memberships give a sense of participation which would not be possible if only agencies were members. Also individual memberships are an important source of revenue. Without individual memberships the National Conference would lose its democratic character and its unique place in social welfare.

It is true that the geographical composition of the membership tends to shift to some degree as the Annual Forum is rotated. This it is believed is at least in part due to the fact that the primary function of the NCSW is the Annual Forum. When the Annual Forum is near, people from that area become members; when it is in another part of the country, these memberships are sometimes dropped. It is likely that this pattern will continue to some degree in the future.

It is recommended that increased effort be made through the program and through the Bulletin of the NCSW to attract more untrained career persons in social welfare; volunteers, particularly Board members; and persons from professions closely related to social welfare. Sessions should not be planned exclusively for any of these groups but their interests and needs should be kept in mind in program planning and publications. Since the NCSW is the only organization which includes both the trained and untrained social worker, professionals from other areas of social welfare and volunteers irrespective of the field of service, it is important that this total group be made to feel that the National Conference is their organization.

## XI. SERVICES OF THE NCSW OTHER THAN THE FORUM ACTIVITY

Other than providing for the actual three-day forum and for servicing the Associate Group meetings, the NCSW provides several other services either concurrent with the Annual Forum or growing out of the Forum. These subsidiary services are: provision for exhibits of national, state and local organizations and the Combined Book exhibit at the place of the Annual Forum; arrangements for Associate Group meetings; provision for consultation, conferences, and interviews with experts in the various fields of social welfare in connection with the exhibits; an employment service in cooperation with the U.S. Employment Service at the time of the Annual Forum; publication of the Forum Proceedings and selected papers; conference services to state conferences of social welfare, regional meetings, and institutes; and service to the International Conference of Social Workers.

These services have not been fully evaluated for purposes of this study. However, certain reactions to these services can be gleaned from the interviews held in San Francisco, and the proposed changes in the National Conference have certain implications for other of these services.

### A. REACTION OF ATTENDEES TO SELECTED SERVICES

Those interviewed at the Conference were enthusiastic about the exhibits of organizations and the Combined Book Exhibit. Interviewees were asked what services they liked best. Almost without exception both types of exhibits were mentioned as a valuable service. This was particularly true of the book exhibit. Having all of the latest books together in one place was deeply appreciated.

When interviewees were asked what additional services they would like to receive, some of them suggested a consulting service. Since one of the services which the NCSW seeks to provide at the Annual Forum is such a consulting service, it is apparent that the method of publicizing this service falls short of ideal. It is suggested that new ways of publicizing the consultation service be devised.

Interviewees were specifically asked whether they were using or had used the employment service either to recruit or to find a position. 23% of those who were interviewed were using or had used the employment service to recruit staff and 4% were using or had used the service to find a position. Given the present labor market situation, it is not surprising to learn that the majority using the service found it unsatisfactory. However, some of these people realized that this was not because the service itself was poor but was a function of the labor market.

It is recommended that organizational and book exhibits and the employment service be continued. It is also recommended that new devices for publicizing the consultation service be created.

It is also recommended that plans be made to assist members to meet informally. This might be done by providing for "coffee hours," cocktail parties, etc., on a cost basis.

B. IMPLICATION OF SUGGESTED CHANGES IN NCSW TO CERTAIN SERVICES

The present kind of service given to Associate Groups in planning meetings would not change considerably if the more focused conference pattern for the NCSW is adopted. The service would be a general administrative conference service to national organizations wishing to have their national, regional, or special conferences preceding or following the Annual Forum. State conferences of social work would continue to receive conferencing services.

The form of publications would also change to include a summary or synopsis as well as proceedings. The synopsis should be accompanied by suggestions for use of the material for both national organizations and state conferences.

C. SERVICES TO STATE CONFERENCES OF SOCIAL WORK

The National Conference has a long history of close association with the state conferences of social work, which exist in all the states except Hawaii and Alaska. These state conferences were originally forum bodies, generally modeled on the NCSW. Some have remained so, while a substantial number of them have over the years taken on additional functions in the areas of planning, coordination, social action, and consultation to local communities on fund-raising and other community organization problems. In certain states, such as Massachusetts and New York, these latter functions are carried on by a separate organization.

There is no organic relationship between the NCSW and the state conferences, but the National Conference provides a limited amount of secretariat service for an informal organization called the Association of State Conferences of Social Work. In this connection it arranges occasional regional meetings of state conference officers and/or staff members, assists the Association in the conduct of meetings at the time of the Annual Forum, publishes an annual directory of state conferences with information about the time and place of their annual meetings, and circulates material of interest among the state conferences.

While it has not been possible for Greenleigh Associates to study this activity of the Conference or the needs of the state conferences in any detail, it should be borne in mind that the state groups represent a valuable resource in terms of securing forum consideration of social welfare problems and issues across the country. According to figures provided by the NCSW, approximately 40,000 persons each year attend the annual meetings of the state conferences and many more (including a relatively high proportion of laymen in many states) take part in the extensive district meetings and institutes organized by some state conferences.

The question of strengthening the state conferences, many of which operate entirely on a volunteer basis, through the provision of national field service has long been of concern to the Executive Committee of the NCSW. In implementing the decisions of the Study Commission the Executive Committee is urged to continue to give attention to this matter. It is hoped that the Executive Committee will consider further the "Proposal for a National Service in the Field of Statewide Community Organization for Health and

Welfare," which was prepared in April 1956 by the NCSW, the Assembly and United Community Funds and Councils, all of which have a direct interest in certain activities of the statewide bodies.

It seems obvious that the NCSW could be of much greater assistance to the state conferences if its resources permitted. On the other hand, a network of strong state conferences could be of inestimable help in extending the effect of NCSW forum activities and, at the same time, a vital source of program ideas and material for the National Conference.



## XII. COORDINATION OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONFERENCES IN SOCIAL WELFARE

Any evaluation of the amount and costs of conferencing in social welfare must be made in light of the role conferencing plays in this field. It is one of the most important techniques for keeping constituencies informed of new developments, for assuring a uniformity of policy and program, and for getting the business of the organization done. As in other sectors of our society, it is recognized that there is some duplication of effort and waste. However, it is not possible to measure this duplication or it is considered necessary. The important factor is for those agencies in social welfare to be aware that such duplication and waste is a threat and consider what steps can and should be taken to eliminate it.

Very positive steps have already been taken in this direction. The national organization executives at the two Workshops in Asbury Park expressed concern about the problem and a willingness to move in the direction of more coordination. It is important that the impetus for further coordination gained at these Workshops not be lost.

It is also important to keep in mind the fact that a total coordination is neither practical nor desirable. There are some national agencies which will need to continue to meet separately either because of size, uniqueness of program, or institutional needs. There are others which could gain strength by meeting with other national organizations. Each agency must decide this matter for itself but must be fully aware of the possibilities for greater coordination.

If it were possible to have a larger number of national or regional conferences held in conjunction with the Annual Forum, progress would be made toward coordinating conferences in social welfare. What mutual accommodation is possible between the NCSW, NASW, and functional national organizations cannot be predicted. As has been said, there were a number of executives of national organizations who indicated that they would be willing to experiment with a national, regional, or special conference following the Annual Forum. This would be a step in coordinating conferencing. It is unlikely at this time that more can be expected. If, however, those organizations planning to meet as a part of the National Conference prior to or following the Annual Forum have a positive experience, other national organizations may also become interested in experimenting.

Although it is not likely that much can be accomplished at the present time, it is probable that more will need to be done in the future to coordinate conferencing. The public, which supports social welfare, is questioning the costs of conferencing. National organizations and governmental agencies are finding that a disproportionate amount of staff time and money is spent attending conferences of other organizations. Because conferencing is growing in other sectors of society as well as social welfare, it is becoming increasingly difficult to schedule a place and time for a larger conference. The probable effect of these forces will be to make coordination of conferencing more attractive.

### XIII. RELATIONSHIP OF NCSW TO ICSW

Any consideration of the future role of the NCSW must include a recognition of the relationship which exists between the NCSW and the International Conference of Social Work. This is true because at least 70% of the time of two staff members is taken by the ICSW; the historical relationship between the two organizations; and the role which the NCSW played in the creation of the ICSW. It has been recognized for some time that the NCSW must consider international aspects of social welfare to fully serve its membership.

This was recognized formally by a special committee set up to study the relationship of the two Conferences in 1958.<sup>9/</sup> In its report to the Executive Committee the special committee said:

"In order to carry out the forum function in this country in our present stage of historical development, the National Conference must be interested in the international aspects of social welfare and think in terms of providing forum programs that bring to its members information about comparative social welfare and about international developments in the field."

The committee agreed that the International Conference serves as the means for providing the kind of information and international point of view which is desired in the NCSW.

Two recommendations of the committee have direct implications for the present study:

1. It expressed the hope that the Study Commission in considering the subject matter of the Annual Forum would pay particular attention to ways and means of insuring that adequate emphasis is given to the international aspects of social welfare in NCSW program planning.
2. It recommended the continuance of the present arrangements relating to the common use of personnel now in effect, while at the same time urging that efforts be made to insure more adequate provision of staffing (and ultimately separate offices) for the two organizations.

The first point is one that needs to be borne in mind by the Study Commission in reaching its decisions about the format which the Annual Forum program is to take in the future. The second is of importance in considering the staff service that is available now, or will be in the foreseeable future, for the NCSW Program Committee. As the members of the Study Commission are aware, by agreement the Executive Secretary spends 20-25% of his time on ICSW business, and the Assistant Executive Secretary in the New York office divides her time evenly between the two organizations.

Another related development has recently occurred. As of October 1, 1959, the NCSW, in response to a request from the U.S. Committee of the International Conference, agreed to serve as secretariat for the Committee. It is hoped that U.S. Committee operations (both program activities and fund raising) can be integrated into regular NCSW operations to a great extent, but there is no doubt that a certain amount of extra time, which cannot now be adequately predicted, will be required from the Executive Secretary and the Assistant in carrying out these new responsibilities.

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<sup>9/</sup> A copy of this report may be obtained from the NCSW office.

#### XIV. LOCATION OF NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF NCSW

The location of the NCSW has been in Columbus, Ohio, for some 30 or 40 years. Earlier it had been located variously in Cincinnati, Chicago and Indianapolis. There has been no apparent reason for location in the Middle West, except fortuitous circumstance. For instance, when Howard Knight became Executive Secretary of the Conference in 1926, it was still a part-time job, and his other job responsibilities required him to be located in Columbus. It became a full-time job for the first time during his incumbency.

Since 1953, a branch New York City office has been maintained as a joint NCSW-ICSW office with an Assistant Executive Secretary of the NCSW in charge. It serves primarily as a liaison office with national and international organizations and with the specialized agencies of the United Nations with which the International Conference has consultative status.

In line with other thinking in this report, it is recommended that the headquarters office of the NCSW be transferred to New York City. There would be several advantages.

1. It would be more accessible to the national voluntary agencies, most of which are located in or near New York City and to the national governmental agencies located in Washington, D.C. Since national organizations are becoming an increasingly important factor in the social welfare field, and should be playing an even more significant role in the National Conference than heretofore, it would be more practical for the secretariat of the Conference to be located near where most of the national agencies are concentrated.
2. There could be more staff service by NCSW personnel to the various committees of the Conference, most of which hold their meetings in New York. Greater continuity of service and committee activity would result, and a better coordination of program planning could be expected.
3. The national voluntary organizations should be expected to utilize their channels to a greater degree than at present in encouraging their affiliates and their membership to participate actively in the National Conference through membership in the Conference and participation in the Annual Forum. The location of the NCSW secretariat in New York City would facilitate this desirable development.
4. It would be easier for the Executive Secretary to carry out his duties relating to the ICSW.

Some of the disadvantages might be:

1. The higher cost of space in the New York City area, and perhaps some higher salary levels for office personnel.
2. The feeling on the part of some that New York City dominates the rest of the country in the social welfare field. The national agencies in the New York area have all had to face this problem and presumably have found the ease of communication, etc., sufficiently advantageous. Moreover, as long as the governing body and the Program Committee are representative of the total country, the Annual Forum is rotated geographically, and persons



from all parts of the United States have an opportunity to share in program ideas, the physical location of the office is of little consequence.

#### XV. IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFFING

It has not been possible within the limitations of this study to make an administrative study of staff functions and use. However, there are certain implications for staff inherent in the recommendations.

Having a focused Annual Forum would require more staff planning and coordination than the present work load of the staff now permits. Since it would be necessary to keep the total Program Committee informed of developments, assist subcommittee chairmen with program ideas, coordinate work of subcommittees, and assist the President in planning and making committee selections, it is believed that the services of a full-time staff member for program planning would be required. This is particularly true in light of the secretariat services for the U.S. Committee of the International Conference which the staff recently assumed. It is also often true that the ICSW requires service at a time when program planning is most heavy. If the staff of the NCSW is to continue carrying its present responsibility for the ICSW and the more recent responsibility for the U.S. Committee, the staff will need to have an extra professional member for program. This may increase the costs of the NCSW.



## XVI. STRUCTURE FOR GOVERNING THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The governing body, as authorized by the Constitution, is the Executive Committee. It consists of the officers and 21 other members, 30 in all. Twenty-eight are elected by the membership and two are appointed by the Executive Committee.

Those elected by the membership are the President, the First, Second, and Third Vice Presidents, the Secretary, the Past President, the President-nominee, and the 21 other members. The Past President and the President-nominee serve as ex-officio members.

Appointed by the Executive Committee are the Treasurer and the Executive Secretary.

Of the 21 members not officers, 9 are elected on a geographic basis, one from each of 9 geographic areas, and 12 are elected as members-at-large. The 12 are usually from national voluntary or governmental organizations.

Traditionally, the Nominating Committee has sought to provide some kind of balance in the candidates it puts forth between career persons in voluntary social welfare, career persons in public welfare, laymen in public or private agencies, and professional social work educators.

It has also tried to provide adequate representation in relation to geographic areas of the United States, functional areas of social welfare, and racial and religious groups within the Conference membership.

Also traditionally, one nominee is put forth for each of the offices, and two or more for each of the other 21 places on the Executive Committee.

The manner of election of officers, other members of the Executive Committee, and members of the Nominating Committee, and the process of rotation, appears to be reasonably democratic and compares favorably with the methods used in the other national conference organizations interviewed for this study.

It is recommended that there be three changes made in the governing structure which will require constitutional amendment:

- (1) The present Executive Committee become a Board of Directors but not be changed in constituency or function.
- (2) That the officers plus three members of the Board of Directors, appointed by the President with the approval of the Board, constitute the Executive Committee. This Executive Committee will have the power to act for the Board between meetings.
- (3) The President-nominee become a President-elect.

## XVII. IMPLICATIONS FOR FINANCING

It is difficult to assess the financial implications of the recommendations made in this study, for they depend on many factors. The National Conference does not have a stable financial base. The margin between income and expenditure has always been a narrow one and has fluctuated according to Annual Forum attendance, which has been influenced largely by the location of the Annual Forum and the nature of the program.

If the National Conference were modified to more adequately serve the entire field of social welfare with a truly "educational forum for the critical examination of basic problems and issues"; developed conference themes that were vital, timely, and from which important implications could be derived for policy, program, and professional practice considerations in various fields of social welfare; and had more impact on the public, it would have more chance adequately to be financed. There is some fear that such an Annual Forum would not draw as large a registration as does the current "cafeteria" type conference. On the contrary, there is reason to believe the modifications outlined would attract a larger attendance. This would be especially true if more national organizations would hold their own national or regional conferences just before or immediately following the three-day Annual Forum of the NCSW and in the same city, as recommended. The constituency could be larger, too, if the national organizations used their channels more actively in encouraging their members or local affiliates to have membership in the NCSW and to participate in the Annual Forum.

Another factor relating to support and status of the Conference is the extent to which the "results" of the Annual Forum were widely disseminated. Here again, the national organizations, as well as the state conferences, should play a major role.

As to direct financial support of the NCSW, in 1958 some \$45,000 was from individual memberships, \$32,000 from registration fees, and some \$39,000 from organization memberships. Of the latter, \$4,000 was from two corporations, some \$30,000 was from local and state organizations, and approximately \$5,000 was from national agencies.

The kind of focused conference envisaged here could be of more interest to foundations and, depending on the theme, to corporations. Renewed efforts could be made to secure support from these sources. National agencies, with more of a voice in the planning of program for the Conference, should be expected to provide more adequate financial support; and if the Conference develops the interest and vitality envisioned here, there should be little difficulty in securing increased registration fees from participants.

In the past attempts to collect registration fees from persons attending meetings of Associate Groups but not the Annual Forum have not been completely satisfactory. If Associate Groups are to meet prior to and following the Annual Forum and the time of the NCSW be approximately eight days, some method for sharing the cost of administrative services should be worked out between the NCSW and Associate Groups. This sharing of costs could be on a flat fee basis to Associate Groups or on the basis of a fee to those attending Associate Group meetings.

In part the answer to the financial implications depends on the extent of mutual accommodation between the NCSW and the national organizations. If the recommendations outlined in this report are adopted, there should be some mechanism established for negotiating the most advantageous mutual arrangements feasible. It is recognized that accommodations cannot be made to satisfy the total group. It is important, however, that Associate Groups continue to be an integral part of the National Conference. It is also important that those other national agencies holding their national conferences almost at the same time as the Annual Forum consider shifting to the same city. It is possible that consideration should be given to a different time of year. However, the popularity of May for other organizations seems to indicate that May or June is a good time.

## APPENDIX A - METHODS USED IN STUDY

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESOURCE MATERIAL IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL WELFARE

As a preliminary step, literature and resource material relating to the National Conference on Social Welfare and to the more general field of social welfare was reviewed. This literature included: Bruno, Frank J., Trends in Social Work, 1874-1956; the 1957 Social Work Year Book; Mills, C. Wright, The Sociological Imagination; Kahn, Alfred, Issues in American Social Work; Kasius, Cora, New Directions in Social Work; Sills, David L., A Proposed Diagnostic Framework, prepared for the Study Commission; NCSW Staff Working Papers for the Study Commission on: 1) Scope and Character of the NCSW; 2) What Should be the Program of the Forum?; 3) Annual vs. Biennial Forum, and 4) How Important is the ICSW to the NCSW?; other resource material supplied by headquarters staff of the NCSW; the Request for a Grant for a Study of the Future Role of the NCSW; and selected Proceedings of the National Conference on Social Welfare.

The programs of the last three Annual Forums were studied and analyzed from the viewpoint of content, attendance and relationship to theme. The results of this review of literature and resource material is included in this report where appropriate.

### WORKSHOPS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

In March 1959, a Workshop of executives of major national organizations and members of the Steering Committee of the Study Commission of the NCSW was held to discuss the relationship of such organizations to the NCSW and to learn more about conferencing patterns in the social welfare field. Specifically, the two major objectives of the Workshop were: (1) to provide the NCSW Study Commission and the social welfare field in general information on present conference activities; and (2) to explore possible modifications in the program and method of operation of the NCSW, particularly as they might relate to the forum activities of other organizations. The participants were invited in a consultative capacity rather than as representatives of national organizations.

A transcript of the proceedings of the Workshop was prepared. This has also been used as part of the background material for this report. While in general the objectives of the Workshop were realized, in addition:

- a. It became apparent that a more intensive study of conferencing patterns was necessary. The participants suggested that a questionnaire be prepared and sent to national organizations in order that a clearer picture of conferencing patterns and purposes be obtained;
- b. It was considered necessary that the views of participants in the NCSW other than national agency personnel should be ascertained; and
- c. Certain problems and questions were raised about conferencing in general and the Annual Forum in particular. These problems and questions primarily related to: the purpose of the Annual Forum, the periodicity of the Annual Forum, the constituency of the Annual Forum, the program of the Annual Forum, and the amount of planning required of national organizations to prepare for Associate Group meetings and for their own national conferences.



A second Workshop composed of executives of the same national agencies was held in Asbury Park in September 1959. The purpose of this Workshop was to elicit reactions to preliminary recommendations growing out of the Study. Participants were asked to react to a restatement of purpose, a proposed program plan, and suggestions for mutual accommodation in national agency conferencing.

The results of this Workshop in brief were:

- a. An endorsement of the proposed statement of purpose with minor modifications;
- b. Divided opinion on the proposed conference plan with the majority subscribing to a more focused program;
- c. An indication on the part of some to attempt to coordinate some of their national or regional conference activities with the Annual Forum;
- d. Considerable expression on the part of those present in favor of a biennial rather than an annual National Conference. However, those expressing such an opinion represented agencies which have a biennial conference and are in the minority among national agencies; and
- e. Endorsement of the continuing need for a national conference on social welfare.

#### INTERVIEWS WITH SELECTED PARTICIPANTS AT THE 1959 ANNUAL FORUM OF THE NCSW.

Since NCSW membership includes not only staff and volunteers of national organizations but also staff and volunteers from local agencies, it was decided that it would be necessary to ascertain what these latter felt about, and expected from, the NCSW. In order to meet this need intensive interviews were held with 205 persons who attended the 1959 National Conference in San Francisco. The questionnaires which were used as the basis of the interviews were developed with the assistance of the Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University. Those selected for interviews came from two sources - a controlled random sample and an uncontrolled sample. The controlled sample included every tenth registrant who was not a member of the Study Commission, a known staff member of a national organization, or a Californian, and every twenty-fifth registrant who was from California. This sample fell short of its objective of eliminating all national staff by 10%. The uncontrolled sample consisted of persons selected at random from the exhibit floor.

The results from these two samples were tabulated separately and tested for significant differences in results. No significant differences were observable in the two groups, therefore, the results of interviews with the two groups were amalgamated. The findings of these interviews are included in the report as appropriate.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE ON CONFERENCING BY NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO THE NCSW

In mid-June 1959, a questionnaire was sent to 94 organizations which was designed to determine the periodicity, purposes, content, participation, and costs of national, regional and specialized conferences and to determine how each related

to the NCSW, if at all. Fifty-six of the questionnaires were returned and tabulated. Some of these findings are included in this report. A complete analysis of the results of these questionnaires will be made available to each agency that participated.

#### INTERVIEWS WITH OTHER NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVING FORUM ACTIVITIES

Interviews were held with key individuals of several of the national organizations, learned societies, and professional associations, having forum activities.

The organizations which were included in this part of the study were:

The American Psychological Association, the American Sociological Society, the American Political Science Association, the American Economic Association, the American Historical Society, the National Education Association, the American Public Health Association, the Adult Education Association, and the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth.

The interviews were structured to determine: format of conference plan and structure for determining program content; organizational structure and governing mechanism; relationship to affiliate groups, if any; conferencing costs and administration; the number of participants at conferences. From each organization a copy of the constitution and by-laws, a program of the latest conference held, and any guides to program committees, nominating committees, or other structural committees were obtained. In a few cases proceedings of their last conference were made available.

#### CONFERENCES WITH NCSW STAFF AND SELECTED INDIVIDUALS

Conferences were held on several occasions with Joe Hoffer, Executive Secretary of the NCSW. These conferences were held to elicit specific information about the NCSW, to test ideas as they were formulated, and to keep him informed on progress.

Conferences were also held with past and present officers of the NCSW, the Chairman of the Study Commission, heads of major national organizations closely related to the NCSW, and other knowledgeable individuals who have been intimately associated with the Annual Forum over a number of years.

APPENDIX B - SELECTED RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS HELD AT THE ANNUAL FORUM  
IN SAN FRANCISCO

METHODOLOGY

The method of selecting the persons to be interviewed at the Annual Forum in San Francisco in 1959 is explained in Appendix A, Part 3. In reviewing the results of those interviews it should be kept in mind that:

- a. The sample did not represent the total universe for by design a large proportion of Californians and, as far as possible, national agency personnel were excluded. Therefore, these results apply only to a selected group;
- b. The fact that the Annual Forum was held in San Francisco may have biased the results. Because of the cost of travel to the West Coast it is possible that a larger proportion of experienced persons and members of NASW were in San Francisco than would be true if the Annual Forum were in Chicago or New York;
- c. The interviews of necessity were all held during the Annual Forum, therefore, reactions to what the persons would get were in many cases based on the reaction to the program notes rather than actual experience with the sessions. However, approximately three-fourths of those interviewed had attended at least one of the four previous Annual Forums.

In testing the sample against the known universe it was found that the per cent of persons from each region in the sample was approximately equal to the per cent of total attendance from the region except for California. There was no way to test the sample for similarity with the universe in regard to sex, age and type of employment. This information about the universe is unknown. It is known, however, that those interviewed represented almost equally both sexes, had a wide range span, and represented approximately the same distribution of social welfare practice as previous samples taken at Annual Forums.

FINDINGS

PARTICIPATION AT ANNUAL FORUMS

Participation at Past Annual Forums Of the 205 attendees interviewed at the 1959 Annual Forum in San Francisco a majority were found not to be regular attendees. Thirty-five per cent had attended the Chicago meeting in 1958, 30% were at the 1957 Philadelphia Forum, 25% were in attendance at St. Louis in 1956, and 37% had been at the last San Francisco conference in 1955. Only 6% of the respondents had attended all of the four previous Annual Forums, 12% three of the four previous conferences, 13% two of the four previous meetings, 42% one of the four previous Annual Forums, and for the remaining 27% the 1959 Annual Forum was their only one in the five-year period.

Nature of Participation at 1959 Annual Forum The majority of the respondents had no direct connection with the Annual Forum other than attending as attendees. Only 12% of those interviewed participated in the program in any way, 9% were assisting with exhibits, and 23% were using the resources of the Conference to recruit staff. It must also be noted that exactly half of the number who exhibited also were engaged in recruiting.

#### PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES OF ATTENDEES

Field of Social Welfare The following responses of the sample group indicated much diversity with regard to the specialties engaged in by the attendees:

| <u>Field</u>            | <u>Per cent</u> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Multifunctional Agency  | 18              |
| Psychiatric Social Work | 14              |
| Child Welfare           | 12              |
| Family Service          | 8               |
| Social Work Education   | 8               |
| Group Work              | 7               |
| Medical Social Work     | 7               |
| Mental Health           | 6               |
| Community Organization  | 4               |
| School Social Work      | 3               |
| Probation and Parole    | 2               |
| Church Social Work      | 1               |
| Students                | 1               |
| Volunteers              | 3               |
| Other                   | 6               |

Thus, while the NCSW seeks to involve persons from the broader field of social welfare, the largest groups are from social work specialties. This is further demonstrated by the fact that 77% of those interviewed were members of NASW.

Position in Agency When employed personnel only is considered, it is found that practitioners in the field made up the largest single group of workers to attend the 1959 Annual Forum.

| <u>Position</u> | <u>Per cent</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Practitioners   | 41              |
| Supervisors     | 23              |
| Administrators  | 36              |

Agency Auspices As shown in the following breakdown, the largest single group at the Annual Forum were from Governmental organizations:

| <u>Type of Organization</u> | <u>Per cent</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Governmental                | 49              |
| Voluntary: non-sectarian    | 31              |
| Voluntary: sectarian        | 9               |
| Other agency                | 3               |
| No agency                   | 5               |
| Volunteer                   | 3               |



How Selected The persons from Government came primarily on their own initiative, for 60% had not been selected by their agency to attend. Conversely, only 25% of those attendees from voluntary agencies came on their own initiative.

Expense of Attendees A number of those attending were responsible for their own expenses. 33% were given only time off or were on their vacation. An additional 26% had part of their expenses paid and 41% were attending the Annual Forum with all expenses paid. The group which most frequently paid their own expenses were from Governmental organizations; 48 or almost 50% were there at their own expense. Nine of these were not given time off. On the other hand, 10% of the persons from voluntary agencies were not reimbursed in whole or in part for expenses. All six of the volunteers in the sample paid their own expenses, while seven of the 18 persons with other agency affiliation or without agency affiliation paid all their own expenses.

Reporting Back In general, those who attended planned to report back to their agency on Forum proceedings. Only 17% had no such plan, and in at least several cases the respondent told the interviewer that this was due to the fact that the agency was not paying expenses.

Geographic Level of Operation Approximately the same proportion of attendees represented agencies operating on the local level (neighborhood, city and county) as those coming from agencies on the higher levels as the following distribution indicates:

| <u>Level of Operation</u> | <u>Per cent</u> |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Neighborhood              | 7               |
| City                      | 16              |
| County                    | 28              |
| District                  | 6               |
| State                     | 26              |
| Regional                  | 6               |
| National                  | 10              |
| International             | 1               |

Length of Service Almost half of the respondents reported that they had spent 15 years or more in the field of social welfare. This is probably due to the fact that in order to reach a position where either expenses are paid by the agency or time is given to attend the Annual Forum one must have either seniority or have attained status. Eighty-nine per cent had been in social welfare five years or more and 71% ten years or more. The breakdown is as follows:

| <u>Length of Service</u> | <u>Per cent</u> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Under 2 years            | 3               |
| 2 to 5 years             | 8               |
| 5 to 10 years            | 18              |
| 10 to 15 years           | 23              |
| 15 to 20 years           | 14              |
| 20 years and over        | 34              |

Educational Background When the educational background of those interviewed is considered, the predominance of the social work field is again emphasized. Seventy-eight per cent of those interviewed had had a year or more of training in a school of social work, 59% had a MSW and an additional 19% had had one year or more of graduate training in social work. Moreover, 27% had graduate training and a degree in another discipline. Only 10% had only a bachelor's degree, and 7% either did not respond to the question or had only some college training. Education below a bachelor's degree was not requested.

#### PROGRAM CONTENT PREFERENCE

In general The interviewees were asked which they preferred between the discussion of broad social welfare issues and trends and sessions on skills and practice. While 14% wanted both or had no preference, 54% preferred sessions on broader trends and issues and 32% preferred sessions on practice and techniques. The expression of interest in the broader field of social welfare was again evidenced when the interviewees were asked to state a preference between hearing persons from the field of social work or from the broader field of social welfare. While the largest number, (43%), had no preference or wanted both, 30% preferred to hear from those in the broader field of social welfare and 27% preferred having persons from the field of social work.

Associate Groups Interviewees were also asked to state their opinion about Associate Groups at the Annual Forum. The opinion was based on some knowledge of the Associate Group meetings as 89% of the interviewees had attended such meetings in previous years or were planning to attend them at the 1959 Annual Forum. 67% of the interviewees felt that there should be no change in the frequency of these meetings with 16% preferring more Associate Group meetings and 17% preferring fewer.

When asked about possible duplication in content between Associate Group sessions and the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Forum sessions, the vast majority of responses (78%) indicated no duplication. 20% felt there was a little duplication, and only 2% expressed the opinion that there was a great deal of duplication.

#### RELATIVE VALUES IN CONFERENCING AREAS

Those who were included in the sample were asked to comment on what values the Conference had for them. These values were preselected. In this regard, the interviewees were specifically asked what factors would be of value to them at the Annual Forum, what they would like to get from the Annual Forum, and those that were most important to them as well as those of least importance. In addition, each person was asked whether the Annual Forum, the conference of his national organization, or the conference of his professional organization, if any, furnished him with each factor to the greatest extent. The information is tabulated as follows:

| <u>Factors</u>  | <u>Will Be<br/>of Value</u> | <u>Would Like<br/>to Get</u> | <u>Get from<br/>Nat'l Org</u> | <u>Get from<br/>Prof Org</u> | <u>Most<br/>Imp't</u> | <u>Least<br/>Imp't</u> |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| (a) clarifies long-range goals of the social welfare field                            | 76%                         | 78%                          | 8%                            | 1%                           | 39%                   | 10%                    |
| (b) informs of recent developments of professional interest                           | 92%                         | 78%                          | 16%                           | 12%                          | 43%                   | 4%                     |
| (c) keeps me in touch with thinking of leaders of my field                            | 88%                         | 77%                          | 17%                           | 10%                          | 34%                   | 4%                     |
| (d) contributes to my professional development  | 82%                         | 70%                          | 17%                           | 13%                          | 30%                   | 8%                     |
| (e) helps learn of new problems of concern to welfare workers                         | 76%                         | 64%                          | 6%                            | 3%                           | 10%                   | 8%                     |
| (f) provides techniques & skills that can be applied to day-to-day problems of my job | 38%                         | 58%                          | 21%                           | 13%                          | 27%                   | 26%                    |
| (g) gives me sense of identity with a larger movement                                 | 86%                         | 57%                          | 4%                            | 7%                           | 15%                   | 29%                    |
| (h) keeps me abreast of fields other than my own specialty                            | 78%                         | 69%                          | 2%                            | 8%                           | 21%                   | 9%                     |
| (i) makes me realize the importance of my own job                                     | 54%                         | 35%                          | 14%                           | 9%                           | 4%                    | 59%                    |
| (j) provides useful new personal contacts   | 72%                         | 57%                          | 11%                           | 11%                          | 15%                   | 37%                    |
| (k) stimulates me to re-think my ideas on controversial issues                        | 77%                         | 73%                          | 8%                            | 7%                           | 25%                   | 9%                     |

#### TIMING OF THE FORUM

The question of how often the Forum of the NCSW should be held is an important one with respect to the future role of the NCSW. When the interviewees were asked whether they would prefer the Forum to be held biennially in the future or remain on an annual basis, the majority or 64% stated their preference for an annual meeting, 23% preferred a biennial meeting, and the remaining 13% had no preference.

#### OTHER CONFERENCES ATTENDED IN TWELVE MONTHS PRECEDING 1959 FORUM

Of the 205 persons interviewed a number had attended other conferences in the previous twelve month period. 37 national functional agency conferences had been attended by 63 persons; those most frequently attended were the FSAA and the National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers with 7 persons each.

Moreover, 32 regional meetings of functional agencies were attended by 82 interviewees. Of this number 15 or 18% attended a regional meeting of the Child Welfare League and 22 or 27% a regional meeting of the APWA.

Twenty national or international professional association conferences had been attended by 59 persons interviewed; 22 or 37% having attended the American Orthopsychiatric Association conference which preceded the Annual Forum.

#### CONFERENCES PREFERRED

Interviewees were also asked which national conference attended other than their own national agency meetings they would attend if they could attend only one. Their own national agency conference was not included because it can be assumed that first loyalty is to one's own agency. It was at least partly due to this reason that only 8% of those responding chose a conference of a national functional agency and 4% a regional meeting of a national functional agency. Another 19% preferred a meeting of a professional association, and the remaining 69% indicated a preference for the Annual Forum of the NCSW. Moreover, when asked to choose between national conferences and regional meetings, 77% preferred to attend national conferences.

While it is difficult to assess how much the fact of being in attendance when the preference was made colored the reaction, still if the possibility of such bias is ignored it can be inferred that those who attend the Annual Forum like it and even prefer it.

Not only is the Annual Forum preferred to other meetings by those who attend but 90% felt that their own agency believed attendance at the NCSW contributed to effectiveness on the job and 73% had made plans to attend specific program sessions before coming. Furthermore, 66% reported that they were individual members of the NCSW and 17% attended under organizational memberships. Thus it can be concluded that the Annual Forum of the NCSW plays an important role in the professional life of those who attend.

#### NCSW EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Since the NCSW Employment Service is an integral function of the NCSW, the interviewees were asked whether they utilized it either for recruiting or for finding positions. It was found that 30% had used the service - 23% for recruiting purposes, 4% for finding positions, and 3% for both. However, only 40% had found the results satisfactory. 48% had found it unsatisfactory and the remaining 12% either did not respond or weren't certain of the results when asked.



### APPENDIX C - STUDY OF CONFERENCING IN SOCIAL WELFARE

At a Workshop of national agency executives in March 1959 at Asbury Park, it became apparent that more data on conferencing by national organizations was required. As a result of a recommendation of Workshop participants, a survey of national agency conferencing was undertaken as a part of this study. The survey was designed to determine the purpose, frequency, attendance and costs of national agency conferences and the relation of such agencies to the National Conference and other national forum activities. The following is a report of the results of that survey.

#### METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire in two parts was developed. The first part was designed to determine the conferencing patterns of national organizations and the second part to determine how, if at all, the national agencies were associated with the NCSW. One of the problems was to determine which national organizations should receive the questionnaire. It was suggested that the list in the Social Work Year Book, be used. However, this list includes some research groups and learned societies related to the social sciences, associations of workers employed by one national agency, foundations, professional associations, and many other categories. It was decided that this list was too heterogeneous and also too lengthy to use.

Another suggestion was to use the member agencies of the National Social Welfare Assembly but this list does not include all of the national organizations which are associated with the NCSW. It was decided to use the list of national organizations which have a relationship to the NCSW either as an Associate Group or agency member, plus two other organizations which participated in the March Workshop.

Ninety-four sets of questionnaires were sent out and fifty-six or 60% were returned. By and large those agencies which returned the questionnaire were the larger of the national agencies. An additional 11 national agencies wrote or returned the questionnaire without filling it out either because they had no national conference of their own or because they had no relationship with the NCSW. Therefore, the number responding in some fashion was 67 or 71% of the sample selected.

#### FINDINGS

Although all of the national agencies included in the survey, except two, are related to the NCSW as Associate Groups or members, not all are of equal size and importance as national social welfare organizations. For example, some are parts of a larger organization with other than social welfare aims. Some are purely social welfare agencies and are not related to a larger group. Furthermore, the national conferences of these agencies vary greatly in terms of size and constituency. Because of this, the formulation of the questionnaire and the analysis of the results present difficulty. The questions were

divided into sections: (a) national conferences, (b) regional conferences, and (c) other conferences including delegate assemblies and national and regional professional conferences. Although some national conferences reported are in effect small professional meetings, the analysis included whatever conference the national organization considered to be its national conference. To have done otherwise would have been to make unjustifiable judgmental decisions. It is recognized, however, that all national conferences reported are not comparable. This is particularly true for the three national agencies which reported an attendance at their national conference of less than fifty persons.

#### NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Purpose Since the primary purpose of the NCSW is to provide a forum for the critical examination of broad social problems and issues, it is important to determine what purposes other national conferences serve. There is no question that such conferences serve many institutional needs, are important in getting the business of the organization accomplished, and in giving the constituents a "sense of belonging." These are important goals for all national organizations. It is important, however, to determine how much, if any, duplication exists between the purposes of the Annual Forum of the NCSW and the conferences of other national organizations. In response to the question: "What are the purposes of your national conference? (Check as many as are appropriate)", the following answers were given:

| <u>Purpose</u>   | <u>Total Agencies Reporting (47)</u> | <u>Per cent of Total</u> |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Exchange of ideas and information   | 46                                   | 98.0                     |
| 2. Conduct of the business of the organization (i.e., election of officers, voting on policy, practices, etc.) | 41                                   | 87.0                     |
| 3. Gives a unifying sense of purpose   | 39                                   | 83.0                     |
| 4. To inform the general public of the program   | 28                                   | 60.0                     |
| 5. Training: Professional (paid staff, non-clerical)   | 21                                   | 45.0                     |
| Volunteers (non-paid, lay)   | 17                                   | 36.0                     |

Thus, it can be seen that the exchange of ideas and information is the most important function national conferences serve. Training of volunteers and professionals is of relatively minor importance. This is true despite the fact that a sample of attendees interviewed at the Annual Forum in San Francisco reported that they looked to their national organization for specific information on techniques and skills. It can be inferred that such techniques and skills are imparted at workshops or other training courses rather than at national conferences.

Such special training courses are a common pattern in several national organizations. However, some national organizations have no training function.

Subjects to which major portion of conference time is devoted Another approach to determining what, if any, duplication exists between the Annual Forum and the conferences of national organizations is to learn what types of subjects are given a major portion of time at national conferences of agencies. The response to the question: "To which of the following was a substantial portion of time of your last national conference devoted? (Check as many as are appropriate)," the results were:

| <u>Subject</u>  | <u>Total Reporting</u> | <u>Per cent of Total</u> |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Exchange of ideas  | 41                     | 87.0                     |
| 2. Presentation and/or discussion of specific problems faced by organization  | 38                     | 81.0                     |
| 3. Presentation and/or discussion of social issues with an immediate implication to the organizational program or methods | 36                     | 77.0                     |
| 4. Presentation or discussion of techniques of operation:   |                        |                          |
| For professionals (paid, non-clerical)  | 35                     | 74.0                     |
| For volunteers (non-paid, lay)  | 18                     | 38.0                     |
| 5. Presentation and/or discussion of matters relating to professional standards   | 27                     | 57.0                     |
| 6. Presentation and/or discussion of broad social issues  | 22                     | 47.0                     |

The above responses in 4. and 5. require some further analysis. The amount of time devoted to training of volunteers or professionals as well as the discussion of standards of practice would be determined in part by the attendance at national conferences. Attendance at conferences of national organizations tends to be predominantly either professional or volunteer in nature. The majority consists largely of professionals. However, three of those organizations which reported no time given to matters of professional standards were predominantly conferences of volunteers.

Who attends conferences of national organizations As has been said, conferences of national organizations tend to be either largely professional or volunteer in regard to attendance with only a few being equally divided between the two groups. The pattern by size of conference in terms of professional attendance can be seen in the following table: (40 agencies provided information)

| <u>Size of Conference</u> | <u>Per cent of Professional Attendance</u> |                 |                 |                  |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
|                           | <u>0 - 24%</u>                             | <u>25 - 49%</u> | <u>50 - 74%</u> | <u>75 - 100%</u> |
| Less than 50              | 0  | 0               | 0               | 3                |
| 50 - 99                   | 1  | 0               | 0               | 1                |
| 100 - 249                 | 0  | 0               | 2               | 3                |
| 250 - 499                 | 1  | 2               | 2               | 4                |
| 500 - 999                 | 2  | 1               | 0               | 7                |
| 1000 - 2499               | 1  | 1               | 0               | 7                |
| 2500 - 4999               | 1  | 0               | 0               | 0                |
| 5000 and over             | <u>1</u>                                   | <u>0</u>        | <u>0</u>        | <u>0</u>         |
| Total                     | 7  | 4               | 4               | 25               |

As can be seen national conferences are composed primarily of professional personnel. The differences are due primarily to the nature of the organization. Recreational-educational organizations like the Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls and the YWCA are predominantly volunteer in constituency, whereas the constituency of agencies in the casework field such as FSAA, CWLA and NTA, as well as the APWA, is predominantly professional in nature. If the nature of the organization is known, the attendance in terms of lay or professional can be predicted.

Number and Frequency of National Conferences Of the 56 agencies which returned the questionnaire, 9 hold no national conference. Of the 47 which have national conferences, 33 or 70% hold them on an annual basis, 10 or 21% hold them biennially and 4 or 9% triennially. Thus, the most common pattern is for national organizations to hold a national conference and to hold it every year. The time of year such meetings occur is as follows:

| <u>Month</u>                             | <u>Annual</u> | <u>Biennial</u> | <u>Triennial</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--|---------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| January                                  | 1             | 0               | 0                | 1            |
| February                                 | 1             | 2               | 0                | 3            |
| March                                    | 2             | 0               | 1                | 3            |
| April                                    | 1             | 2               | 0                | 3            |
| May                                      | 11            | 3               | 1                | 15           |
| June                                     | 5             | 0               | 0                | 5            |
| July                                     | 0             | 0               | 0                | 0            |
| August                                   | 0             | 0               | 0                | 0            |
| September                                | 2             | 0               | 0                | 2            |
| October                                  | 3             | 0               | 0                | 3            |
| November                                 | 2             | 2               | 2                | 6            |
| December                                 | <u>2</u>      | <u>1</u>        | <u>0</u>         | <u>3</u>     |
| Sub-Total                                | 30            | 10              | 4                | 44           |
| No date given or not regularly scheduled | <u>3</u>      | <u>0</u>        | <u>0</u>         | <u>3</u>     |
| Total                                    | 33            | 10              | 4                | 47           |



It is significant in terms of future planning that of the 44 agencies giving the date of their national conferences 15 or slightly more than one-third meet in the same month as the NCSW and an additional 4 meet in early June. However, not all of these meet at the same place as the NCSW.

Size of National Agency Conferences Attendance at national agency conferences vary from a low of 14 to a high of 8,440. A breakdown in the size of national conferences is as follows:

| <u>Size</u>         | <u>Annual</u> | <u>Biennial</u> | <u>Triennial</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Less than 50        | 3             | 0               | 0                | 3            | 6.4               |
| 50 - 99             | 2             | 0               | 0                | 2            | 4.3               |
| 100 - 249           | 5             | 1               | 0                | 6            | 12.8              |
| 250 - 499           | 7             | 3               | 0                | 10           | 21.3              |
| 500 - 999           | 8             | 2               | 0                | 10           | 21.3              |
| 1000 - 2499         | 4             | 3               | 2                | 9            | 19.0              |
| 2500 - 4999         | 3             | 0               | 1                | 4            | 8.5               |
| 5000 and over       | <u>0</u>      | <u>1</u>        | <u>1</u>         | <u>2</u>     | <u>4.3</u>        |
| No attendance given | <u>1</u>      | <u>0</u>        | <u>0</u>         | <u>1</u>     | <u>2.1</u>        |
| Total               | 33            | 10              | 4                | 47           | 100.0             |

Only two of the national agency conferences of organizations responding to the survey rival in size the attendance of the Annual Forum. However, two others in the 2500 - 4999 category in the above table were as large or larger than the 1959 Annual Forum in San Francisco.

Number of days national conferences are in session National agency conferences are in session from two to six and a half days and average about 3-3/4 days per conference. Those national organizations which hold an annual conference usually schedule for approximately 3-3/4 days, biennial conferences average 3 days, and triennial conferences five days. The number of the latter, however, is too small to make the average significant.

#### REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Number and frequency of national agencies having regional conferences Thirty-three or 59% of the fifty-six organizations which completed the questionnaire in part or in full hold regional conferences. In every case those reporting regional conferences were among the 47 national organizations which reported a national agency conference. Of the 33 which hold some kind of regional conference, 20 or 61% hold such regional conferences annually, five or 15% are on a biennial basis, three or 9% are triennial, one agency has a regional conference approximately every sixteen months, and four others or 12% are not regularly scheduled in time.

The number of regional conferences per national organization varies widely. The range in number of conferences held varies from one to

thirty-five with an average of slightly more than eight regional conferences per agency.

Purposes of regional conferences Like national conferences, the primary purpose of regional conferences is the exchange of ideas and information. However, there are some important differences in purpose. In response to the question - "What is the purpose of such regional meetings? (Check as many as are appropriate)," the answers were

| <u>Purpose</u>   | <u>No. of Agencies Reporting</u> | <u>Per cent of Total</u> |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Exchange of ideas and information   | 32                               | 97.0                     |
| 2. Gives a unifying sense of purpose   | 23                               | 70.0                     |
| 3. Training: Volunteer (non-paid lay)  | 17                               | 51.5                     |
| Professional (paid, non-clerical)  | 14                               | 42.5                     |
| 4. To inform the general public of the program   | 14                               | 42.5                     |
| 5. Conduct the business of the organization (i.e., election of officers, voting on policy, practices, etc.). | 11                               | 33.0                     |

The most significant difference in regard to the purposes of regional conferences is the ranking of the conduct of the organization's business. Another significant difference is the ranking of the training of volunteers. The latter is of least importance in national conferences but of third importance in regional conferences. This difference can be explained in part by the kinds of persons in attendance at the two types of conferences.

Who attends regional conferences The proportion of volunteers attending regional conferences tends to be greater than the proportion at national conferences according to those who answered this part of the questionnaire. Whereas at national conferences approximately 75% of those agencies giving information had national conferences predominantly professional in nature, regional conferences are divided almost evenly between being predominantly professional or volunteer. This phenomenon may be due to the fact that those agencies with a large volunteer membership are more apt to have regional meetings.

#### OTHER CONFERENCES

Delegate Conferences In addition to their national conferences, as reported above, twelve of the 47 organizations reported that they also had delegate meetings. Five held such meetings annually, three biennially and the others every three to five years. Attendance at such meetings ranged from 9 to 300 with the average approximately 90.

National Professional Conferences Ten organizations reported that they had a separate national professional conference. Five of the agencies held such conferences annually while the remainder were scheduled from every two to three years. Attendance at these conferences ranged from 60 to 260 with the average being approximately 120.

Regional Professional Conferences Six agencies reported regional professional conferences which were distinct from regional conferences sponsored by the organization. Five agencies held such professional conferences annually and one biennially. Attendance at these conferences ranged from 15 to more than 5000.

#### COSTS OF CONFERENCING

Costs to Agency It is impossible to estimate the total cost of conferencing in social welfare. However, some information is available from the responses of the national organizations. National organizations were asked to estimate the total administrative costs of their last national conference. These costs included national staff travel and living, speakers, space, visual aids and other direct costs. They were also asked to estimate the indirect costs in terms of national staff salaries and time. Not all of the agencies were able to give the requested information. Neither is it certain that the estimation of indirect costs included all of the costs of planning for the agency's conference. Therefore, this information is not complete and may not be comparable. It is certain, however, that the estimates are low rather than high since the responses are incomplete. The costs to the agencies were as follows:

| <u>Costs</u>        | <u>Number of agencies reporting</u> |                       |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
|                     | <u>Direct Costs</u>                 | <u>Indirect Costs</u> |
| Below \$500         | 2                                   | 2                     |
| \$500 - \$1499      | 6                                   | 8                     |
| \$1500 - \$4999     | 10                                  | 6                     |
| \$5000 - \$9999     | 7                                   | 5                     |
| \$10,000 - \$24,999 | 9                                   | 4                     |
| \$25,000 - \$49,999 | 6                                   | 1                     |
| \$50,000 - \$99,000 | 1                                   | 0                     |
| \$100,000 and over  | <u>2</u>                            | <u>0</u>              |
| Total               | 43                                  | 26                    |

There is as might be expected a high correlation between size of conferences and costs.

Although other cost figures were requested, the number of agencies responding was too small to make the answers meaningful. Very few national organizations could estimate indirect costs of national and regional conferences, costs to participants or costs in terms of professional time spent at conferences. It is estimated, however, by the Convention Bureau in New York that the average cost per day to participants at conferences is \$30. The figure is probably high for social welfare.

#### RELATIONSHIP OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO THE NCSW

Since all national organizations, except two, included in the survey were related to the NCSW either as an Associate Group or a member, it follows that the majority would be involved in the Annual Forum in some way. Fifty-two agencies answered the part of the questionnaire relating to association with the NCSW. Three of the 52 reported that they did not participate in the NCSW in any way. Either there was an error in interpreting the question or the list of agencies affiliated was not correct. Only two of the organizations were not agency members or Associate groups. However, as reported, participation was as follows:

Does your organization participate in the National Conference on Social Welfare?

Yes: 49

No: 3

If yes, how

|                              | <u>Number</u> |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. As an Associate Group     | 36            |
| 2. Organizational membership | 12            |
| 3. Exhibitor                 | 36            |
| 4. Use employment service    | 11            |
| 5. Other                     | 3             |

Thirty of the fifty-two agencies reported that members of their national staff or board were involved in the program planning of the last Annual Forum. Moreover, thirty-six reported that members of their national staff or board were called upon to participate in the program. Of this number twenty reported that participation in the program was frequent.

Forty-one reported that they assigned members of their national staff or asked volunteers to attend the Annual Forum. Thirty-six reported that they encouraged lay attendance. However, when asked if the NCSW should involve the volunteers from their organization in the meetings of the Conference to a greater extent, approximately fifty per cent said yes and the remaining fifty per cent said no.

Thirty-one of those responding held meetings either prior to, concurrent with, or following the Annual Forum. The breakdown was as follows:

|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| Prior to:        | 8  |
| Concurrent with: | 20 |
| Following:       | 3  |



# RELATIONSHIP OF NATIONAL AGENCIES TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, NOT THE NCSW

Not only do the national organizations included in the survey relate to the NCSW, but also the majority have a continuing relationship with other organizations. Such relationships take two forms: (1) national, regional, or specialized meetings held in conjunction with other organizations, and (2) staff representation at conferences of other organizations.

Meetings held in conjunction with other organizations Fifteen organizations reported that they regularly hold meetings in conjunction with other organizations. The list of the organizations with which these national agencies regularly meet is in excess of thirty and include among others, The American Camping Association, American Nurses' Association, National Probation and Parole Association, American Institute of Planners, American Correctional Congress, American Recreation Congress, National Rehabilitation Association, American Public Health Association, American Group Therapy Association and the National Council of Churches.

Meetings attended by national staff Only three of the fifty-six organizations reported that their national staff members do not spend any time attending conferences of other organizations. Of the fifty-three organizations which reported, the number of conferences their staff regularly attend is an average of 7.75 meetings per year. One national agency reported that they were represented by national staff members at seventy-five national conferences. The national conferences most frequently attended by national staff members by number of agencies reporting is as follows:

| <u>National Conference</u>            | <u>Number of National Organizations Reporting</u> |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| National Social Welfare Assembly      | 19  |
| United Community Fund and Councils    | 11  |
| American Public Welfare Association   | 10  |
| Council on Social Work Education      | 9   |
| Family Service Association of America | 8   |
| Child Welfare League of America       | 8   |
| National Health Council               | 7   |
| National Council of Churches          | 7   |
| American Public Health Association    | 6   |
| American Medical Association          | 5   |
| National Recreation Association       | 5   |
| AFL-CIO Community Services Division   | 5   |
| American Camping Association          | 5   |

Since not all of the national organizations reported named the other organizations at whose national conferences they were represented, the number of agencies represented at any of the above conferences probably is greater than indicated. Other conferences which staff members of national organizations attend are: the Council of National Organizations, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Adult Education Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the National Education

Association, the National Personnel and Guidance Association, the National Public Relations Association, the National Association of Training Directors and the American Management Association. This list is only partial.

Per cent of staff time spent in attending meetings of other organizations  
Respondents were asked "Approximately what per cent of your staff time is spent preparing for, and/or attending meetings of national organizations other than your own or the National Conference on Social Welfare?"

Thirty-two of the fifty-six organizations made an estimate of the staff time so spent. One reported that no time was used for this purpose and one reported that 30% of staff time was spent for other conferences. One organization reported that the amount of time varied for individual staff members from 5% to 50% of total time. The average amount of national staff time spent in attending the conferences of other national organizations exclusive of the NCSW is 7.25% of total staff time. In addition to those which made an estimate of per cent of staff time, three reported that a considerable amount of time was so spent, one reported a negligible amount of time and seven said it was impossible to estimate. It can be inferred, however, on the basis of this small number that at least 5% of national staff time is spent attending or preparing for conferences, other than the NCSW or the national agency's own conferences.

XUM